DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 268 569 CS 209 714

AUTHOR	Holbrook, Hilary Taylor, Comp.
TITLE	An Exemplary High School Literary Magazine: "Cinnabar."
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Urbana, Ill.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	[86]
CONTRACT	400-83-0025
NOTE	69p.; Photographs may not reproduce well. For other magazine profiles in series, see CS 209 701-720.
AVAILABLE FROM	Ward Melville High School, Old Town Rd., Setauket, NY 11733 (Magazine only--profile not included--$3.00 plus postage).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Competition; *Creative Writing; *Evaluation Methods; Faculty Advisers; High Schools; Periodicals; Production Techniques; Student Evaluation; *Student Publications; Teacher Role; Writing Evaluation; Writing for Publication
IDENTIFIERS	*Exemplars of Excellence; *Literary Magazines; National Council of Teachers of English

ABSTRACT

One of a series of 20 literary magazine profiles written to help faculty advisors wishing to start or improve their publication, this profile provides information on staffing and production of "Cinnabar," the magazine published by Ward Melville High School, Setauket, New York. The introduction describes the literary magazine contest (and criteria), which was sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and from which the 20 magazines were chosen. The remainder of the profile--based on telephone interviews with the advisor, the contest entry form, and the two judges' evaluation sheets--discusses (1) the magazine format, including paper and typestyles; (2) selection and qualifications of the students on staff, as well as the role of the advisor in working with them; (3) methods used by staff for acquiring and evaluating student submissions; (4) sources of funding for the magazine, including fund raising activities if applicable, and production costs; and (5) changes and problems occurring during the advisor's tenure, and anticipated changes. The 1984 issue of the magazine is appended. (HTH)

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AN EXEMPLARY HIGH SCHOOL LITERARY MAGAZINE: CINNABAR

Compiled by

Hilary Taylor Holbrook

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
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INTRODUCTION

In 1984, the National Council of Teachers of English began a national competition to recognize student literary magazines from senior high, junior high, and middle schools in the United States, Canada, and the Virgin Islands. Judges in the state competitions for student magazines were appointed by state leaders who coordinated the competition at the state level.

The student magazines were rated on the basis of their literary quality (imaginative use of language; appropriateness of metaphor, symbol, imagery; precise word choice; rhythm, flow of language), types of writing included (poetry, fiction, nonfiction, drama), quality of editing and proofreading, artwork and graphic design (layout, photography, illustrations, typography, paper stock, press work), and frontmatter and pagination (title page, table of contents, staff credits). Up to 10 points were also either added for unifying themes, cross-curricular involvement, or other special considerations, or subtracted in the case of a large percentage of outside professional and/or faculty involvement.

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In the 1984 competition, 290 literary magazines received ratings of "Above average," 304 were rated "Excellent," and 44 earned "Superior" ratings from state contest judges. On the basis of a second judging, 20 of the superior magazines received the competition's "Highest Award."

As a special project, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills has selected 20 magazines from those receiving "Superior" ratings to serve as models for other schools wishing to start or improve their own student literary magazines. The profiles of these magazines are based on the faculty advisor's contest entry sheet, the judges' evaluation sheets, and interviews with the faculty advisors. Where possible, the magazines themselves have been appended. Information for ordering copies of the magazines is contained at the end of each profile.

CINNABAR

Ward Melville High School

Setauket, New York

Principal: Dr. T. MacKrell

Faculty Advisor: Brian McAullife

Student Editors: David Lazer and Michael Weinstein

"A paper flies
flies away
in the breeze of a waning sun.
Man's thoughts
soar, soar to heights--
over the tallest mountains,
climbing to the pristine heavens above.
But only on
a paper..."

--"Springtime Thoughts in the
Winter Breeze--"
David Lazer
Cinnabar Student Editor

Ward Melville High School is a three-year public school located in the Long Island suburb of Setauket. The school's 2,300

students come primarily from upper-middle class backgrounds, many from families associated with the State University of New York at nearby Stonybrook. The students of Ward Melville have published their literary and art magazine under the name Cinnabar since 1980, and under the names "Graffiti" and "Prisms" for several years prior to that.

FORMAT: COVER CONTEST

The 1984 issue of Cinnabar measures 8 1/2 x 11" with sixty pages, center-stapled. The text is printed on cream colored felt finish paper, and the cover is printed on tan felt finish cover stock. The cover, the 1984 winner of the magazine's annual cover contest, is illustrated with the title of the magazine in calligraphy and decorated in the style of manuscript illumination. This design is repeated on the title page.

Within the magazine, titles are set in 18 point Times Roman typeface, authors in 16 point Times Italic, and text in 9 point Times Roman. Black and white photographs and artwork complement the writing throughout the magazine, with some of the photographs reduced to 1" x 3" wide and placed within the text of a short story, others cut into different pieces and laid out on the page to frame a poem.

PRODUCTION: CREATIVE WRITING STUDENTS

Membership on the staff of Cinnabar is open to any interested students, but most come from the creative writing classes taught by Brian McAulliffe, the magazine advisor. The staff usually consists of around 30 students, and student editors are elected by the staff for the following year. Mr. McAullife,

who has been advising since 1983, works as a member of the staff and has only one vote--the same as other members. Staff members meet oncea week after school hours. Mr. McAullife admits that continuity is sometimes lost from one meeting to the next, and hopes to incorporate the magazine production into a class in the near future.

Other than two poems written by Mr. McAullife, all of the writing is done by students, as is 99 percent of the editing. All artwork, photography, proofreading, design and paste-up are also done by students. A commercial facility is contracted for printing.

SUBMISSIONS: DISMAL-HUMOROUS CONTEST

Students in the creative writing classes are encouraged by Mr. McAullife to submit writing for publication in Cinnabar. Other students are encouraged by English teachers, and by means of posters and advertising in the school newspaper. Contests sponsored by the magazine for cover illustrations and for the best dismal poem and best humorous poem also serve to encourage submissions. Mr. McAullife notes that it is difficult to get art submissions, so art editors go to the art classes to remind students of the opportunity to submit.

Although Mr. McAullife participates in the selection process, making suggestions concerning the merits of various works, the students gradually develop their own set of criteria, many assimilated from the creative writing classes. As Mr. McAullife notes, the students body has some "very talented"

students, which makes a tremendous difference in the quality of submissions and editorial work.

FUNDRAISING: "CINNABAR IN CONCERT"

About half of Cinnabar's $1,400 to $1,600 budget comes from the school budget, the staff must request those funds each year. The remaining funds are acquired through fundraising activities, including sale of the magazine. Staff members regularly sell doughnuts to students, and also sponsor "Cinnabar in Concert," an arts festival for the community designed to draw attention to the magazine. Students perform by reading poetry, playing music or singing, or presenting one-act plays. Generally, proceeds from this activity are set aside for the following year. Staff members handle about 95 percent of this business aspect of production. The staff produces Cinnabar at a cost of $6.30 per copy, for a print run of 250 to 300, and sells it for $3.00 each.

Although it has not materialized yet, each year Mr. McAullife anticipates a budget crisis because the funds from the school budget are not guaranteed, and the fundraising money is subject to the ups and downs of sales and admissions receipts. In spite of the public relations nature of the "Cinnabar in Concert" showcase, ideally Mr. McAullife would prefer to focus on the magazine rather than financial concerns. IT is a credit to the staff members and thier advisor that htey can produce such a magazine in spite of these perennial budget problems.

***

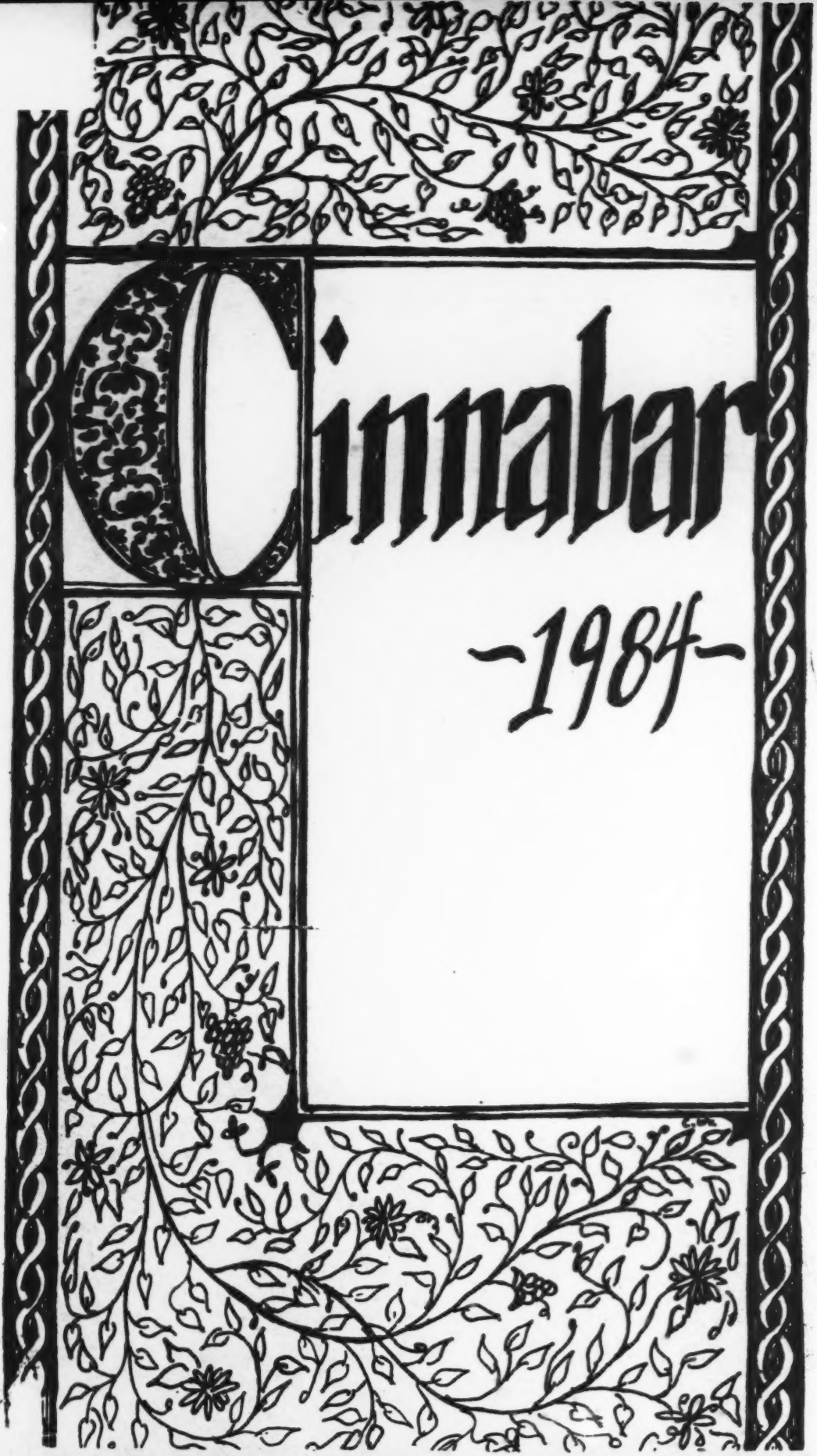
Copies of Cinnabar may be obtained from

Ward Melville High School

Old Town Road

Setauket, NY 11733

Price: $3.00 (plus postage)


Cinnabar
-1984-

WARD MELVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

About our cover:
The cover of **Cinnabar 1984** is the winning entry of **Cinnabar's** cover contest. Its creator is Catherine Wu.

Editors
David Lazer
Michael Weinstein

Art Editor
Amy Liebowitz

Treasurer
Aliza Stein

Publicity Manager
Mukta Srivastav

Staff
James Altieri
Julie Blue
Laura Cleland
John Crispino
Adam Kaufman
Stuart Semmel
MeiPu Yang

Advisor
Brian McAuliffe

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Editors' Note

The aim of this high school literary-art magazine is to 1) provide a platform for the writers and artists of this school and 2) give the students on *Cinnabar* an opportunity to hone their abilities as critics and organizers. Happily, we can say we have succeeded on both counts. The quality of our material is outstanding, as you will see, and from diverse sources. Our staff has enjoyed reading and editing it. We have had failures mixed in with our successes, but all in all, this has been a very, very good year.

We must thank those who helped make the magazine possible. Messrs. Frevola, Marshak and Messina and Mrs. Singer provided invaluable assistance by urging their students to submit material. Mrs. Heischmann xeroxed reams of paper for us and provided much-appreciated advice at our weekly meetings. We also thank the Corner Bookshop and the Setauket Frame Outlet for providing prizes to our various contests, and the many superb performers in this year's "*Cinnabar* in Concert."

Most of all, we owe thanks to Brian McAuliffe, who has not only been a great advisor and an excellent writer (see *Monday Morning in the Suburbs*, and *My Notebook*) but has also been a friend.

This year has been a rewarding one for us. We have been given high quality material on both the literary and art sides. In addition, we have had an exceptionally strong staff. We are particularly pleased with the success of Amy Liebowitz and the art staff, possibly the strongest Melville has ever had. We also single out Laura Cleland on the staff, who put in as many hours as we did on the magazine. We hope Mr. McAuliffe and next year's staff meet with equal success.

D.L.
M.W.

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Carolyn Kellner

schools of people
wander; aimlessly
drifting —

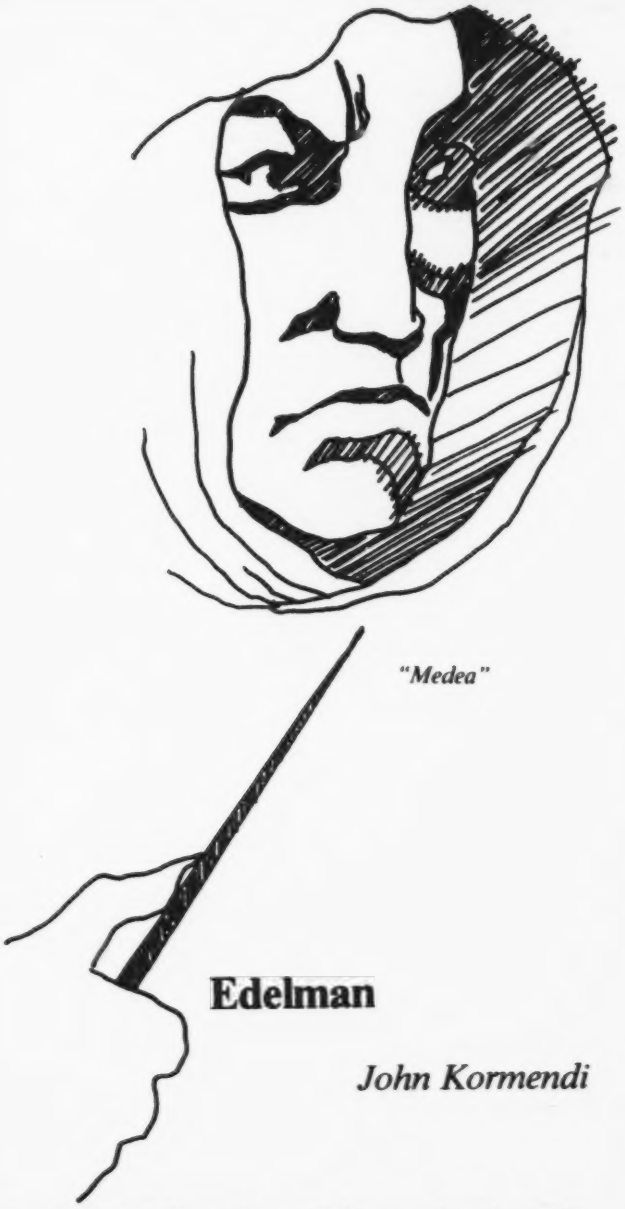
mouths open and close
(chew and swallow
sip and slurp)
with alarming regularity

conversations meander
(literature — Greek, of course —
economics, politics and sex:
not always in that order)
gossiping men and women
wait for their chance, and
attack
(words first, minds later)

silence:
the crowd waits expectantly
splash!
as the olive falls through the
dry martini
and settles
on the bottom

everyone sighs, relieved
and
continues to wait for the end of
The Cocktail Party

Irving



"Medea"

Edelman

John Kormendi

It was finished. He sat there with his arms drooping to the ground and his legs spread out. His mouth was wide open and his tongue dropped over his front teeth. His eyes were almost crossed and a huge pimple protruded from the bridge of his nose. If Edelman were in a different situation he would have laughed. He had such an idiotic expression, this man sitting here with his eyes almost crossed and a huge pimple on the bridge of his nose. But, despite his ridiculous expression, Edelman could not laugh. It's hard to laugh at a dead man, especially when you killed him.

Edelman felt a resurgence of pride swelling within his breast. He was surprised that it ended so quickly and so easily. His seventy-three-year-old chest heaved up and down with each laborious breath. His heart beat wildly. Never before had he felt so triumphant, not when he married, not when his son was born, not when he got promoted. At last, he was able to savour the taste of true contentment. Seventy-three years without any feeling of self-satisfaction. Self-worth, yes. But not satisfaction. There was always something missing from his life. Edelman pretended that he didn't know what it was, but he knew. And it was frightening.

There was still a tinge of blue on his victim's foolish visage, with fingerprints surrounding his throat. Edelman felt no guilt for what he had done. Was it truly a crime? What had this hoodlum contributed to society? He hung around at the disco every night, drinking, smoking, yelling, spitting, kicking, punching, etc. His "vocabulary" was limited to an unoriginal repertoire of derogatory remarks and a jargon of profanities and incorrect grammar, in which he always used double negatives. Edelman, though he was not a native, spoke ten times as eloquently as this repulsive slob. In addition to all his undesirable qualities, this poor excuse for a human being seemed to have a personal vendetta against Edelman. Every time the two crossed the same path, he was subjected to a barrage of insults. He didn't like being referred to as an "old man" and was not a "penny-pinchin, cheap, gutless, old Jew." But what could he do? It was very unlikely that a seventy-three-year-old man who was 5'4" and 140 pounds could do anything to a 6', 220 lb. brute. So Edelman remained passive, but not intimidated. He had experienced things like this before. As a matter of fact, it was rather amusing. Despite his frail physique, he was tougher than his adversary, because he had suffered more and had emerged victorious every time. In every traumatic predicament the main enemy, he had found out, was himself. This "nobody" didn't present any problem. It was his own anger and pride that had to be taken care of.

But this incident did not stem from anger or pride. When Edelman woke up this morning, he saw his antagonist trespassing on his lawn. Apparently he was searching for something that he had lost and wasn't aware that this was the "gutless Jew's" property. An unquenchable passion swelled within Edelman's breast, a yearning that couldn't be denied. In a minute it was all over.

What actually drove him to do this? Did it stem from his antagonist's provocations? Was his character so vile, so loathsome that it deserved nothing less than death? No harm had befallen Edelman, so murder was clearly an inappropriate form of retribution. The human mind is funny. Half the things we know about are emotions; our minds we are afraid to discuss. To unravel the enigmas of psychology we must discuss and experiment with every facet of the mind, including the ones that are an affront to our dignity and moral systems. They are repugnant, repulsive, anathema, taboo. But they are there and *frequently manifest* themselves in our society. What prompts incest? Rape? What facet of our emotions precipitates a My Lai massacre, a Holocaust, a Charles Manson-type slaying? We know. These questions are answerable. We're just too afraid to give it any thought.

So why did Edelman do it? It was simply a strong desire to kill. The murder was not carried out in any sadistic fashion. Edelman just fell prey to a lifelong urge that couldn't be repressed any longer. His life had been a hard one; many cruelties and injustices were committed against him that ran contrary to his system of values. This man (note that he is not a hoodlum or a repulsive slob anymore) met his doom because of what he represented, not because of what he actually had done. He was the victim of a hate so black, so intense, that any means of defense or escape would have been futile.

As of now there was no hate in Edelman's eyes or heart. No regret either. Just indifference. It was done, he was satisfied. It was neither right nor wrong. It was life. Some would say he fulfilled a basic animal instinct, that of an irrepressible drive of aggression. It was no "animal" instinct. That's just a term we use to compensate for our own fallibility. It was a human instinct, as common as dreaming, hoping, wishing, thinking, and loving. All too human.

Edelman took one last look at his victim's face. He laughed.

All too human.

Ocean

ocean—
wintergreen
blue,
greytoned
ice,
royalblooded
indigo...
down deep we go
beyond air and earth and
fire burning out
leaving lovers alone
entwined
like seaweed floating;

down deeper we go
beyond,
leaving the dark night alone
until all that is left is

tomorrow's sunlight on the watery grave

Mukta Srivastav

poem
oemp
empo
mpoemanifests itself, being nothing
more
than a
poem.

Lisa Hayle

love is a flame that
ignites passion —
but there's a fire
extinguisher in every hall.

Lisa Hayle

An explicable, nameless
sorrow
stirs in my heart as
I cup her
head in my fingers,
and feel it soft
and lifeless, tender,
but not warm —

Reluctantly, I
withdraw my hand
and that once-lush
face falls limply against
the withered green
at a queer angle;
Like a night-wearied
damsel, caught unawares
by the harsh morning
sun.

Johanna Li

The Cryptographer's Corner

Cryptology is the game of deciphering messages written in code. In this case the codes are formed by substituting one letter of the alphabet for another. For example, the word *"Cinnabar"* can be written in code form:

CINNABAR
IFKKCQCJ

where I stands for the C and so on. Below are four intriguing quotes and their well-known authors, each written in a different code. Length and punctuation of words are hints, and the answers may be found later in the magazine.

a.)

BGBSQ AHNB X JCHWL KXQK, "H LVU'A FBWHBGB HU IXHSHBK", ACBSB HK X WHAAWB IXHSQ KVNBRBSB ACXA I XWWK LVRU LBZL.

— KHS PXNBK NXAACBR FXSSHB

b.)

Y, BSCU VKSRU, ZL USR XIYFQ HQKFZYU FCZF FCQ HKYLQE SN FLYE MIYPFD PZUG RYPP UQAQK VQ JIKMQG ZRZD VIF RYFC VPSSG.

— PZEF EFZFQLQUF
BSCU VKSRU

c.)

QYVGW GYT XWT NO QNEFFHAMK?
AG MTETF QVW QNFGY QYART,
WN, SVCH XS HNXF GFNXJRTW AM HNXF
NRU HAG-JVK,
VMU WZART, WZART, WZART.

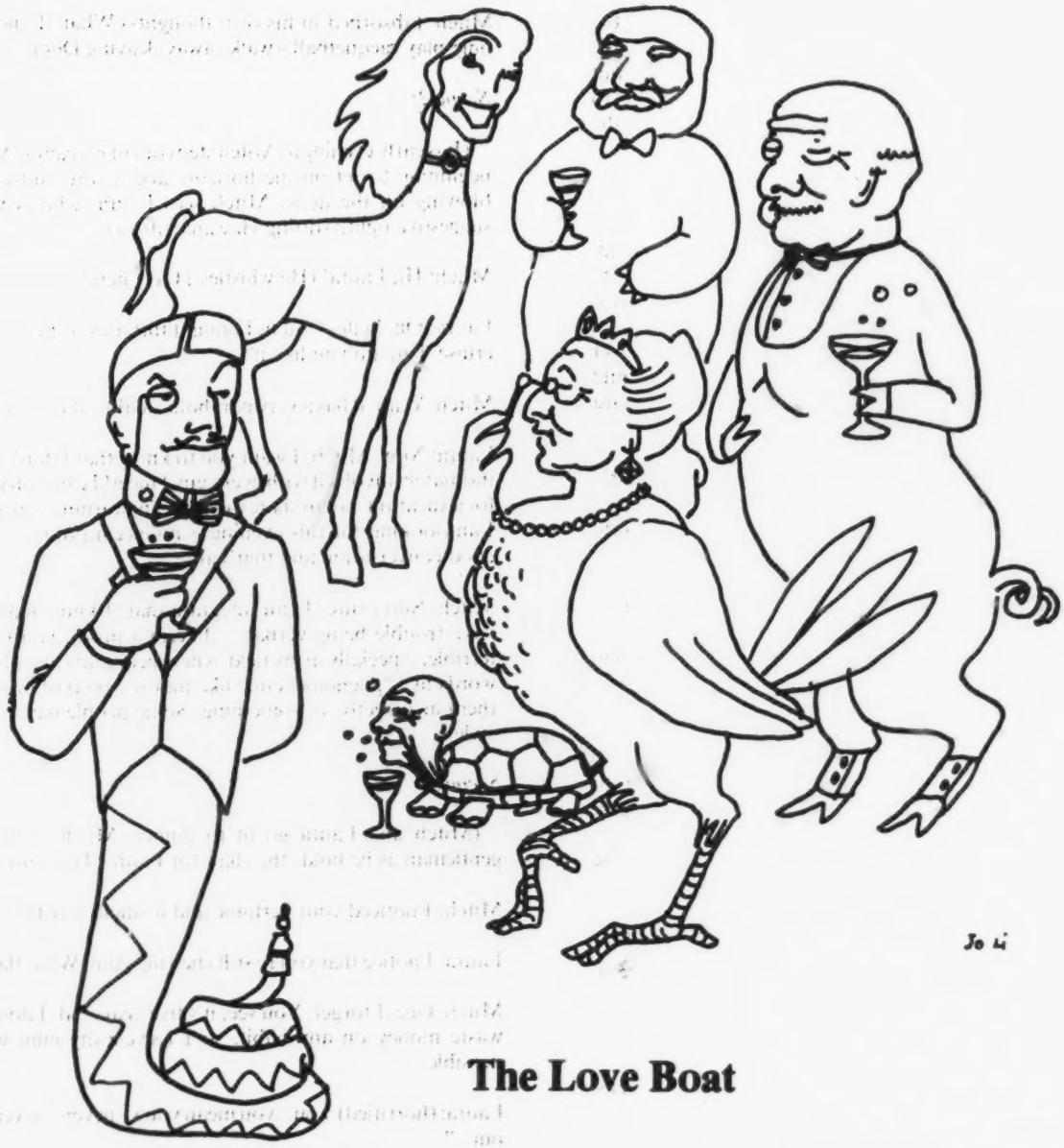
— KTNFLT VWVO

d.)

BKQ CZ VQUX K LIIT, MSI OIKJIZM MSCQS CQ QKMFLI; EFM GI CZ K MGCQJCQS LIIT.

— EUKCZI DKZAKU

Michael Weinstein



The Love Boat

Mindy Kaplan
Alex Zaleski

Guest Stars:
Mitchell Skrzypecki ..... Mitch
Loni Anderson..... Laura

Scene I:

(Music begins. As it is fading away, Mitch walks on board.)

Julie: Good afternoon. Welcome aboard.

Mitch: Yeah, gorgeous day, isn't it? What a phenomenom! Oh, I'm Mitch Skrzypecki,

Julie: Well, let's see, Mr. Skrzypecki. Oh yes, you're on the Aloha deck, Cabin 143.

Mitch: Thanks, uh...Miss...

Julie: Julie McCoy, your cruise director. If there's anything I can do for you, just let me know.

Mitch: Believe me, I will! (spots a gorgeous girl) Oh excuse me, Miss McCoy. (Mitch walks over to girl.) Hi there!

Girl: Oh, hello. (goes back to reading magazine)

Mitch: You know, from the moment I saw you, I knew you were, well, nice, just like the graph of a trig function — you know, you and I were meant to grope together.

Girl: Buzz off!!! (She leaves.)

Mitch: (to himself) What a snob! (ambles casually over to the railing of the ship) My, what a lovely seascape. Rather like a...sine wave. (heh, heh) (spots another gorgeous, well-built girl) Hmmm, speaking of sine waves...(The girl walks over to the railing but ignores him.) Uh, excuse me, do you have the time?

Laura: (looking up briefly) Three o'clock.

Mitch: Ah, the big hand is perpendicular to the little hand, forming two sides of an isosceles right triangle — no, I'm sorry, it wouldn't be isosceles...Let me see...I have a calculator here...(Laura snubs him, begins to walk away. Mitch struggles for something to say.) Uh, er...excuse me...but, have you ever considered the beauty of the sea? (Laura looks up with mild interest.) Phenomenomal, the way it snuggles hyperbolically against the x-axis of the horizon.

Laura: Are you sick or something? Can I get you an aspirin?

Mitch: (insulted) Some people just don't appreciate Mathematics.

Laura: (with renewed interest) Oh, are you a Math teacher?

Mitch: Why, yes! How did you know oh, wait a minute (smugly) I know, it's my Captan Inverse tee shirt, isn't it?

Laura: Well, no, not exactly...

Mitch: Wait, I know I'm being kind of pushy, but I want us to be associative, and well...will you have dinner with me tonight:

Laura: You know, you've very strange, but you might be interesting. You see, I'm a psychology major...

Mitch: (to himself) Let's see, if I let p = dinner tonight, and q = you know, and r = you're very strange, and $r \rightarrow p$, $p \rightarrow q$, then it must....

Laura: Hello? I said yes.

Mitch: You did? Jumpin' joint probability distribution! Let's see now, the chances were...

Laura: Listen, I really must go now.

Mitch: Wait, what's your name?

Laura: Laura Thompson.

Mitch: Oh, I'm Mitch Skrzypecki, and I love every minute of it. I'll pick you up at seven.

Laura: No, I'll meet you outside the dining room. I have to go unpack now. By the way, do you always chew gum like that?

Mitch: Like what?

Laura: Well, forget it — I'll see you later.

Mitch: Bye! (Meanwhile, Doc has been walking toward Mitch.)

Doc: I see you're really up at bat today, huh?

Mitch: (absorbed in his own thoughts) What? I...no, sorry, I only play racquetball. (walks away, leaving Doc)

Scene 2:

(It is early evening as Mitch steps out of his cabin. A red sun is beginning to set on the horizon, and a soft, sultry breeze is blowing on the deck. Mitch sees Laura, who is wearing a suggestive tightly-fitting Hawaiian dress)

Mitch: Hi, Laura! (He whistles.) Over here!

Laura: Oh, hello, Mitch. I bought this dress especially for this cruise. Um, do you like it?

Mitch: Yeah, it has a very parabolic quality about the neckline.

Laura: Now, Mitch, I want you to know that I don't like to get intimately involved with every guy I meet! I came on this cruise for a vacation, not to snare men! So I'm warning you now, what I am looking for this evening is an elegant dinner and some good conversation and that's all.

Mitch: Sure, sure, I can integrate that. I know many people have trouble being verbal like in a proof, you know? It's terrible, especially in my field, where people are afraid to use big words like "phenomenom," like they're afraid of pronouncing them incorrectly, or something. Some people have such poor style.

Scene 3:

(Mitch and Laura go in to dinner. Mitch is the perfect gentleman as he holds the chair for Laura. They order.)

Mitch: I noticed your perfume and it smells terrific!

Laura: I notice that you're still chewing gum. What flavor is it?

Mitch: Gee, I forget. You see, it's five years old. I don't like to waste money on any habit, so I recycle my gum whenever possible.

Laura: (horrified) You...you mean you've never...never taken it out...?

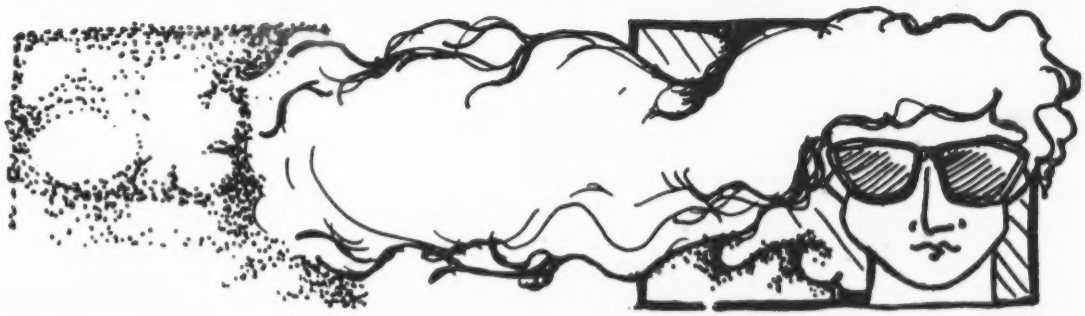
Mitch: Oh, I take it out at night. And when I eat, of course. (The waiter arrives, setting their dishes before them.) Ah, dinner is served. Now, f'instance, 'sposin' I were to keep my gum in while swallowing this linguini. It could get messy. (Mitch pulls out his gum and sticks it on his spoon. Laura stares at it in horror.)

Mitch: I like to watch the waitresses' faces when they take a gander at that.

Laura: You, you...you're psychotic! I've never even studied a case as bad as yours! I can't go through with this! (She runs out of the dining room.)

Mitch: Laura! (He runs after her, calling her name and finally catches her on deck. It is a beautiful night — stars, moonlight, etc. Mitch grabs Laura's arm.)

Mitch: Laura, listen, I'm sorry.



Laura: Let go. Leave me alone!

Mitch: I should have told you. I, well, it's just that gum is a major part of my life.

Laura: But five years?

Mitch: It's a record...

Laura: But it's...sick. You need help. I don't know that I'm the person to —

Mitch: Laura, I need you. I don't know why, but as soon as I saw you, I just, Laura, I...(He kisses her.)

Laura: No, Mitch...please...(He ignores her and continues to kiss her passionately. Laura soon ceases to struggle.)

Laura: (after a while) I'm sorry I was so dramatic. I just don't think I'm prepared to deal with your prob —

Mitch: Laura, I want you. Will you be with me tonight? Please?

Laura: Oh, Mitch, I don't know, you see, I —

Mitch: My God, I forgot my gum! I've got to go back and get it!

Laura: Is that all you can think at a time like this, your gum? For a minute, I even thought your cared about me.

Mitch: I do, but my gum!

Laura: You can take your gum and...and STICK IT!!!!!! (She storms away.)

Mitch: (desperately) Laura!! (Then he remembers.) MY GUM!! (He runs back to the dining room and to his table only to find another couple seated there.)

Mitch: Excuse me, have you seen a spoon with a piece of gum on it? (The couple look at him in astonishment, then turn away, ignoring him.)

Mitch: (to himself as he runs out of the dining room) The Captain, I've got to see the Captain! (He runs out on deck and sees Gopher.)

Mitch: Excuse me, where can I find the Captain?

Gopher: Well, he's busy on the bridge right now, but I can —

Mitch: Thank you. (He runs toward the bow of the ship. In the midst of his panic, he runs smack into somebody.) Oh, I'm sorry.

Captain: That's quite all right, I'm used to it. I don't believe we've met. Permit me to introduce myself. I'm Captain Merrill Stubing.

Mitch: Oh, Captain, hello, I'm Mitch Skrzypecki. I need to talk to you. I have a problem.

Captain: What can I do for you?

Mitch: Well, you see, I've lost my gum.

Captain: I'm sorry, what did you say? There seems to be a lot of noise in the background.

Mitch: I SAID I'VE LOST MY GUM!

Captain: Oh, gum! For a second there I thought you said "gun"! We can't be too careful here on Princess Cruises. Now as to your gum, we have a concession stand down on the opposite side of the deck to your left where you can buy gum —

Mitch: No, no! Not a pack of gum!

Captain: Just one piece? It must have been some special flavor to have you in such a tizzy!

Mitch: No, no, it wasn't any flavor! I mean, it once was! It's my record-breaking gum which I've been working on for five years! I left it on a table, stuck to a spoon —

Captain: Now let me get this straight — calm down, son, calm down! You've mislaid a piece of stale, five-year-old, pre-chewed chewing gum, and you want me to find it?

Mitch: It has a lot of sentimental value.

Captain: (looking heavenward) I'm afraid this is out of my realm, but I think I know just the person to help you.

Mitch: You do? Thank God! Who?

Captain: Doctor Adam Bricker, affectionately called Doc, here on board. He can take care of you temporarily, until you get a regular psychiatrist. Till then, take it easy, old man! (The Captain pats Mitch on the shoulder and walks away.)

Mitch: Now what should I do?

Scene 4:

(It is late that same night. Mitch is the last one left in the bar. He is very unkempt and has acquired a "5 o'clock shadow." He sits alone at a table, slumping over a glass of liquor and a small book open to a page covered with formulas. The bartender, Isaac, comes over to him.)

Isaac: (sitting beside him) Drowning your sorrows?

Mitch: (thickly) Whenever I'm depressed, a good dose of differential Calc always cheers me up. It always puts the world in perspective, making everything else unimportant by comparison. Hey, you know, I once derived a formula that covered three entire blackboards, and —

Isaac: Please, spare me...I've had a late night myself. What's on your mind:

Mitch: This is probably the first time in my life when I've ever had my ego slightly deflated. Just think — I lost the girl, the gum, and everything...All but my precious Calc book. (He holds the book to his heart.)

Isaac: Listen, everyone has times when —

Mitch: (ignoring him) The girl I could've done without, but dammit, my record-breaking gum. (Looks up at Isaac with genuine emotion.) I loved that gum. I don't know how I'll make it without it.

Isaac: (agape and staring) Look, Mac, why don't you go to bed and first thing in the morning, drop by Doc's office? (He rises, helping Mitch up and out the door.)

Mitch: You know, a lot of people have been suggesting that lately.

Scene 5:

(It is a delicious, sun-drenched morning on the Caribbean. Mitch has decided to take the Captain's and Isaac's advice and is going to pay a visit to Doc Brinker.)

Doc: (upon hearing knock) Come in. Ah, what can I do for you?

Mitch: Doc, it's — really rather trivial, nothing a good asymptotic graph wouldn't cure...it's just that I feel so depressed. I think I'm going to die!

Doc: There, there, sit down, Mr....

Mitch: Skrzypecki. Mitch Skrzypecki.

Doc: Uh, yes. Now, Mr., uh, Mitch, can you tell me what's bothering you? Why you're depressed?

Mitch: Well, you see, Doc, I had this gum...no, I guess that's not what's really bothering me. It's Laura. She's afraid to get involved with me!

Doc: This Laura, your girlfriend?

Mitch: Yeah, sort of.

Doc: Now why is she afraid? Do you know?

Mitch: Because she thinks I'm insane.

Doc: Hmm...good reason.

Mitch: Wait a minute, Doc! I may be a fanatic, but I'm not crazy! Just because I happen to appreciate some of the finer things in life, like continuous functions and formal integration, and good gum, doesn't mean I'm...psychotic, does it?

Doc: (dubiously) No...certainly not...

Mitch: Hey, I never realized that! I'm not nuts! Just different, you know, like Boolean algebra! I've got to go find Laura. Oh, and, Doc, (shaking his hand) thanks a googol! (Mitch leaves Doc's office and begins searching the decks for Laura. He finally sees her, leaning on the ship's railing, looking contemplatively out to sea. He calls to her.)

Laura: Oh, Mitch! (She rushes over.) I'm so sorry for the way I've acted. I realize now that a silly thing like gum shouldn't come between us. Those little trivial differences of opinion don't matter. What matters is the way we feel about each other!

Mitch: Oh, Laura!

Laura: Oh, Mitch! (Music. They embrace in an all-consuming kiss, then draw apart.)

Mitch: (after pause) You were too wordy.

Laura: What?

Mitch: In your proof a few minutes ago, you were too verbose. Also, you started out with the apology and ended up with the sweeping generalization. Poor style. And the transitive relation! You forgot to draw the transitive relation. Very, very poor. That, along with reasoning from the converse, is really inexcusable. I'm afraid I'm going to have to penalize you in red, Laura.

Laura: What on God's green earth are you babbling about now?

Mitch: This is hardly a syllogism, Laura.

Laura: I give up on you! (She walks away in tears.)

Mitch: (calling after her) You'll never get A's with that attitude! (Dramatic music — cutoff. Commercial break.)

Scene 6:

(The next morning. Laura is seated at a table eating breakfast alone. Mitch walks in. Seeing Laura, he goes and sits at another table already occupied by a beautiful brunette. He starts talking to the brunette. Laura notices this and angrily finishes her food, continuing to glance casually at them. However, despite her mood, she cannot help but laugh when the brunette dumps scrambled eggs down the shirt of a very surprised Mitch, and leaves. Mitch hastily stands up, full of eggs, and his surprise turns to vicious anger. He sees Laura laughing, and, overcome by his emotions, goes up to her and slaps her cheek, hard. Bystanders, hearing the tremendous slap and Laura's surprised gasp, turn and stare. There is a moment of silence. (Picture this, folks.) Mitch realizes what he has done and, in a daze, he stares at his hand. He finally comprehends that he has inexcusably hurt her. He looks at Laura's accusing face and, unable to control his emotions, leaves hastily. Laura gazes strangely and thoughtfully at him as he leaves — she thinks that she saw something very odd in his expression.)

Scene 7:

(It is later that day, late afternoon, and Laura goes to Mitch's cabin and knocks on the door.)

Laura: Mitch? Are you there? (She turns the doorknob; the door is unlocked. She opens it and peeks in.) Mitch? (She sees a lump on the bed and a Captan Inverse tee shirt in the garbage pail.) Mitch?

Mitch: (muffled, from under the covers) Will you please leave?

Laura: Mitch, I know I said I gave up on you...

Mitch: (still muffled) Laura, I hurt you. I'm sorry. Now please go away.

Laura: (comes over and sits on the bed) Mitch, I think I love you.

Mitch: (with his head still turned away from her, partly under the covers) Laura, I'm no good for you. (sarcastically) Me and my Calc, boy, we sure make a swell team. Both predictable, and —

Laura: Mitch, I have something for you.

Mitch: I don't want it.

Laura: Please open it, for me? (Mitch slowly sits up in bed, still half under the covers and takes the box from her. He opens it. Inside is a pack of Trident sugarless cinnamon gum.)

Mitch: (close to tears) Laura? Oh, Laura, I love you. (Laura does not answer him. Instead, she kisses him, etc., and turns the lights out. Music. Commercial break.)

Scene 8:

(Music. Everyone is leaving the ship. Mitch and Laura are leaving, arm in arm, and they stop to say good-bye to the crew — Captain, Doc, Isaac, Julie, Gopher, and Vicki.)

Julie: I hope you enjoyed the cruise.

Laura: Oh, we did, didn't we, Mitch? (Mitch gives her an idiotic grin.)

Captain: I'm sorry we couldn't find your gum.

Mitch: That's OK, I've just started on another piece. And there are whole Matrices of gum out there, as vast as the Universe —

Laura: (warning him gently) Mitch....

THE END

Above Dirt Flats

Above dirt flats
its feet are perched
upon a black wire
sitting calm, feathers back.
My bus passes too fast to see it fly.

Robert Ellis

and the little doll

And the little doll sits in the corner and gathers up the dust, and watches and wants.... She sees the world moving in front of her, but she won't grab it, so she sits and stares.

Sometimes the ball rolls over to her — so she smiles and laughs and lives...but she throws it back.

And when the wind blows, and she shivers, and the streets are quiet and the house is empty...she waits for the others to return, knowing she'll get up and play. So she waits...and waits....

And when the Sun comes back into the room, she smiles and watches....Then the ball rolls back to her, so she laughs, and she looks at its friendly roundness...then...she throws it back.

And the little doll sits in the corner and cries, and then the dust grows sticky...and as it dries, she dies.

Ellie Thomas

What a Show

I opened my eyes.
Why is there light?
When I get up at six,
It's dark, not bright.
I looked at the clock.
Oh no! Seven-O-five.
Twenty minutes
And the bus will arrive.
I sprang out of bed.
Stubbed my toe on the chair.
Grabbed my robe.
And a towel for my hair
I ran to the bathroom
And turned on the shower.
There's no hot water
Come on! I don't have an hour!
I took out my earrings.
They fell down the drain.
My stubbed toe hurts.
Now I'm in pain
I ran to my room,
Plugged in the dryer,
Turned it on high
And the darn thing caught fire.
I dropped it quickly,
It fell on my toe.
The same one I hurt before.
What a show!
I pulled out the plug.
Now what will I do?
I'm hungry
I could go for some food.
I took the Rice Krispies off of the shelf.
Everything fell.
I hate myself.
I picked up the boxes,
Put them all back,
Walked toward my bedroom
And stepped on a tack.
I screamed so loud
And without any warning
It suddenly hit me,
It's Saturday morning.

Terri Tangredi

Winner of the humorous part of the **Cinnabar** *Dismal-Humorous contest.*

My Notebook

My SCHOOLTIME COMPOSITION NOTEBOOK
is made in Roaring Spring, PA.
Its leaves are bound by a marble cover.
"It's for writing," I say, "anything that comes to mind."
But the sky blue lines and red margins
frame white space and I am empty.

Perhaps if I went to Roaring Spring
I would find a poem, a story, a song
rising from the mist over the water
that crashes down from great heights.
Maybe I'd meet a local in the forest
eager to reveal a story of his past,
something basic and true
about survival or faith or love.

But I'll bet the waters don't roar
and the locals drive Toyotas and watch
made-for-T.V. movies
after coming home from their notebook factory.

So I close the book
and stare into its marble surface,
a galaxy of inchoate sounds and lights.
Speak to me, misty local,
my pen is ready to record your words.

Brian McAuliffe

Lady Macbeth's Reincarnation as a Modern Teenager

Off, damned jeans! Off, I say!
One, two; why, then tis time to tug-oh, gangrene 'twould be awful!
'Oo, la la' — alack, it should 'Ouch' be, thrice panted!
What need I fear — Brooke Shields and like may yank them on and off!
Yet who would've known 'twould be so difficult!
O, sundry pairs have I tried on — but never one so quite confining!
What, will these jeans ne'er come off?
Aah, I feel reliev'd; suddenly I look not so pale.
My circulation is restored.
But woe is me when gym's time runneth out!

Joanna Miller

A New Warrior

Karen Kendrick

The night was dry, the sky bright with the shining rays of the full moon. There were no stars. They chose to stay hidden rather than be outshone by the brilliance of the full moon floating beneath them.

It was a good omen for Tailla. The clearer the moon shone on The Eve of Induction of a new warrior, the greater would be her luck in the future. It was very rare that a young woman had a ceremony for herself alone. The high sorcerers usually waited for at least three to come of age before calling upon the Great Wanderer to grant them the knowledge and the power to become warriors for the City of the High Sorcerers. Tailla's importance had been revealed to Sortair, the highest of the sorcerers, in a dream. It was for some reason imperative that she become a warrior tonight, on this, the brightest in the travels of the Great Wanderer.

Tailla bowed her head as she knelt in front of the great sorcerer. He looked down at her, wondering why she had been chosen, why she had to be inducted tonight. He turned from her to lift the sword that would soon be hers from its special case. He then held the sword aloft to the ceiling, calling upon the spirits to make her a warrior. He cried, "Oh, Great Wanderer, give forth your light, let it shine upon this newly-forged sword and its master. Grant this young woman the knowledge to use it wisely. Grant her the strength to hunt the wildest of beasts and to slay the evilest of men. Let this sword know its bearer and give only her the ability to swing it. Let her defend us with justice and power."

With those words, the great Sortair turned the sword to catch the light of the moon and shine it down upon the golden hair of the woman kneeling before him. He then brought down the tip of the sword and touched her shoulder. As he raised it back up to the ceiling, she, too, rose from her assumed position. Holding the sword out to her with both hands he pronounced, "By the powers that flow through me from the ancient ones, the Great Wanderer now gives to you this sword and its power and the knowledge to use it to its fullest extent."

It was then that Tailla spoke. "I pledge to use my newly-granted power for the purposes of the protection of the city and the hunting of food and no other. I pledge my heart to the Great Wanderer and to the powers that keep him on his path."

Tailla's hunting ability would be tested early the next morning. She must do well, for is she was unsuccessful, it would be a bad omen for the entire city.

As it was, luck went with them; they spotted a large herd of deer early in the hunt. Choosing a large male hanging in the back of the group, they prepared to take chase. The relay began at a sign given by their leader. One warrior cut in between the animal and its herd as the rest started a stampede. When the chaser's horse began to weary, another took over. This continued until the animal tired enough to be caught by a hunter on horseback. It was Tailla's job to be the final rider, to strike the killing blow. She was big, larger than most others and expected to grow even more. She did her job well, driving her sword deep into the animal's flesh at first swing.

It took Tailla a moment to comprehend what she had just done, but when she did she cried out in excitement, "HA, HA! I did it, I really did! Kouri, look at it. It's so big." She yelled to her sister as she approached. The Great Wanderer has given me a strong sword to have slain such a large animal on first blow."

At that moment, the head warrior, Proess, caught up to the young woman and her prize. Praising Tailla, she said, "It was not only the sword that contained the power to so easily defeat this large deer. You are a very strong woman. I am happy that you have done so well; you should be proud of yourself."

While they began to gut and cut up the animal, Kouri rode to the river to fetch water for the rest of the hunt. When they finished preparing the meat for transport, Tailla noticed that her sister had not yet returned. "Proess, if it is all right, I would like to see what is keeping my sister."

"Go, but hurry back. If she takes this long by herself I can just think what you would do together."

"Thank you, Proess, I'll be right back," Tailla cried as she jumped on her horse and rode off into the woods. It took only a few moments before she heard the rush of the water. Stopping to listen more carefully, she thought she heard something more than just water. "Kouri?" Terror began to fill the pit in her stomach. When she realized what it was that she heard, she charged towards her sister's screams. She stopped when she saw the clearing ahead. There were two men attacking her sister.

They were Konduns, fierce barbarians who usually stayed to the west of the city. They hated women warriors. They felt threatened by the High Sorcerers and the women who guarded them. They believed that women should be submissive, ready to give in to a man's pleasures whenever he wanted. Women warriors were not trained that way. They were among the few women of the time who were allowed to deny a man at their own discretion.

Without thinking of the dangers, Tailla raced forward. Her horse galloping in full stride, she grabbed her sword from its place on her back and swung it savagely at the man holding down her sister. His head was cleanly separated from his shoulders and flew into the bushes beyond. She turned to face the other man, but he had already fled into the woods.

"Kouri, my sister, please tell me that you're all right," Tailla cried as she jumped down to her sister's side.

"Oh, Tailla, thank you. I was so scared. I didn't think anyone would come." She sobbed as she put her arms around her savior's neck.

Proess was worried as they rode back into the city, over the drawbridge and through the high stone arch. It wasn't right for her to kill one Dundun and let the other go. He would go back and tell his people. They would want revenge, and it would be Tailla who would have to pay.

That night Tailla and Kouri sat together in the small chamber adjacent to the meeting room of the high sorcerers. A young boy, serving as an acolyte to the sorcerers, came into the chamber. "Sortair and the high sorcerers have demanded your presence before them. They have reached a decision. Come." They followed him into the dark, forbidding room.

They walked humbly with their eyes cast downward and knelt before Sortair. They waited for the touch of his hand on their shoulders to signal them to look up and hear their sentences.

"My dear children, an unforgivable act has occurred. Although the man who tried to take his pleasure with Kouri deserved the death of the sword, it should have been done properly. The City of the High Sorcerers should not have been put in jeopardy." The great sorcerer was sad at what he must say; he was close to the woman he must condemn. "Kouri, the sorcerers of this council have found your name to be unshamed; you will have no punishment." The sisters sighed a breath of relief and smiled slightly at each other.

"Tailla, I had high expectations of you. The Great Wanderer has favored you since your birth. I don't understand why he has chosen to disgrace you so now. Your name has been shamed. No child born of this city shall ever bear it. We have been contacted by the Konduns. They want us to give you to them at dawn tomorrow, or they will destroy the city. It is either the death of one, for they will surely kill you, or the death of all. I'm sorry, Tailla; you must be given to them. It is the greatest crime of all to put in danger the lives of the city. There is no other way." Sortair turned to leave the room as fast as he could. He loved Tailla and could not bear her sentence.

The sun rose angrily that morning. Tones of red and orange were filtering through the sharp thin clouds cutting through the sky. An uneasy silence had fallen over the city. The people were shocked. They didn't understand what had happened. The warriors were supposed to be infallible; how could one of them put the city in danger? It was against every principle the people held holy to endanger all for the life of one.

Sortair walked with Tailla, towards the stone archway and the drawbridge beyond. "I cannot tell you how sad I am. You know that I have cared more for you than for any other warrior." He stopped and turned toward her. He put his hands on her shoulders, crying slightly in an unusual display of emotion. "Tailla, you were born of my pleasure. I was going to make you high warrior when you reached a proper age. Oh, child, we must keep faith; the Great Wanderer must have his reasons."

"Sortair, I love you so, and I will try to brave no matter what they do to me." She began to weep. Her cries became more intense. "I'm so scared. I know a warrior is not supposed to have fear, but I cannot help it. Please help me, please. If you are my father, please help."

"There is nothing I can do. You must go. Walk with me always in your heart, as you will be in mine."

As he embraced her one final time, he looked out to the Konduns who were standing on the other side of the water. There weren't as many as he thought there would be. He thought that the conquering of a woman warrior would bring out the whole camp. Maybe their numbers had dwindled in the past year.

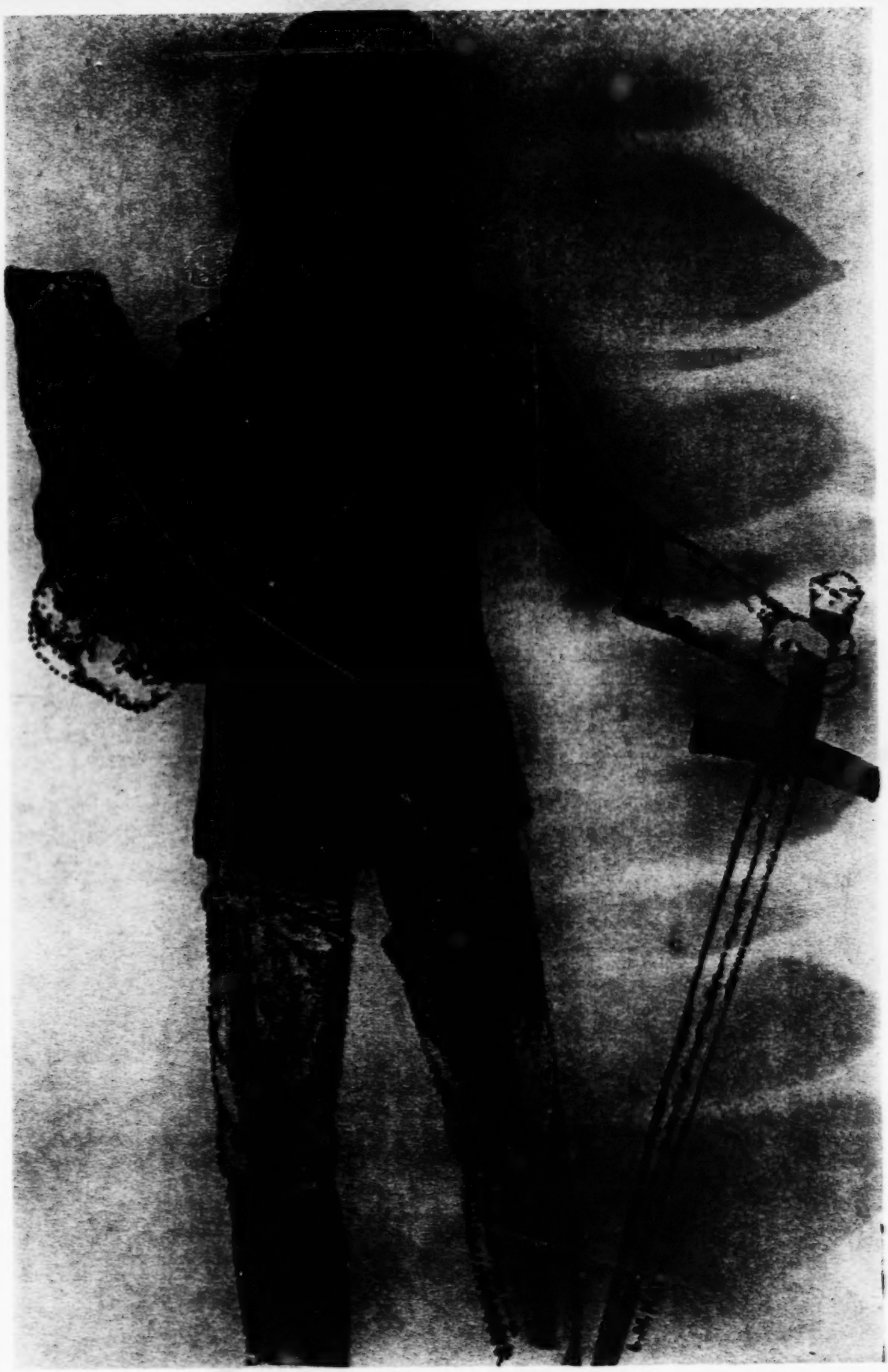
Suddenly he and Tailla heard the familiar sound of the woman's battle cry coming from all directions. They came from everywhere, from the forest around the city and from the city itself. They quickly surrounded the Konduns, who were trying desperately to fight back. Light flashed from the swinging swords turned red with blood. Men fell heavily from their horses onto the hard earth below.

It was but a moment before Tailla jumped into the battle. She was quick with her sword, quick enough to even out the disadvantage of being on her feet instead of on a horse. The women had struck fast as lightning, and the battle was over quickly. The few men who had not been slaughtered retreated as fast as possible, leaving their dead behind. They didn't expect to be attacked. They came anticipating easy victory, not deadly defeat. Their ancient fear of women warriors had been restored. They would not again tangle with the deadly women blessed by the Great Wanderer.

The women came slowly back to the city. They were numb with what they had just done. Tailla returned last. She carried in her arms the only casualty they had suffered. It was Proess. The very one who had organized the battle to save Tailla had lost her life in the process.

Tailla wept for her dead friend. She knew that it was Proess who had saved her. She cried for help as she reached Sortair. "It's not fair! Sortair, help her. There must be something we could do. We need Proess; who else could ever be as good as she? Who will lead us without her?"

"The death of Proess is a sad occasion; she will always be held in high regard. You are the chosen one. You will now be the high warrior. We will all benefit from your wisdom. The Great Wanderer favors you, and through you, he will favor our city."



25 *"dragonslayer"*

Depression a la Cocoa

Blackness
A never ending entity,
A place in which to roam.

Leave behind the grays,
Only to reach for the Blackness,
The promise.

Feet
Never touching reality,
They float into swift leaps
Toward an enlightened zone.

Come one, Come all
To Blackness
Where the twisted, hungry groan

Rebecca Pettigrow

The School Clock

The clock. TIC, TIC, TIC, TIC. It's omniscient. TIC, TIC, TIC, TIC. It is a lone sentinel sitting, staring, beckoning for all to see.

It knows all. TIC, TIC, TIC, TIC. It sees all. TIC, TIC, TIC, TIC. The teacher who passed the failing student, the snoozing janitor. It watches over the failing student trying to do his best. It glares down upon any unwelcome visitors. TIC, TIC, TIC, TIC.

Omniscient is the word. TIC, TIC, TIC, TIC. It is everywhere. The classrooms. TIC. The Gym. TIC, TIC. Cafeteria. TIC, TIC, TIC. The top of the school: EVERYWHERE! TIC, TIC, TIC, TIC.

It is obstinent, unyielding. TIC, TIC, TIC, TIC. It is a drone, never stops, just keeps going, keeping the peace, the time. It manages to get the best of everyone, one time or another, even me, especially me. The beat goes on. TIC, TIC, TIC, TIC.

Most people spend their lives trying to be that perfect. TIC, TIC, TIC, TIC....Just when they think they've got it down.... They move the clocks ahead....TIC, TIC, TIC, TIC.

Robert Locher

27

I was a success

John Kormendi

It was a beautiful spring day. The trees and the baby green grass glistened freshly in the sun. The sky stood out blue like the ocean. The wind blew gently, placing a soft kiss on the middle-aged man. He took a deep breath so he could feel the sweetness throughout his body. His jacket was ripped and lay limply over him. His face was narrow and drawn, making him look older than he probably was. If it were not for the glistening in his eyes, one would have thought he must be very sad and had lived a hard life.

He stopped short when he noticed a beetle crossing his path. He watched as it scurried quickly across. He saw a bench in the distance and decided he would just go over there to sit and admire the beauty of the day and how lucky he was to be alive. He made his way to the bench and on the way he looked over to see two small boys playing softball. He felt blissful watching them play — just as he did as a child. A feeling of nostalgia filled him. Happily smiling he waved to them. In turn they laughed and waved back. As he sat he observed everything and his face took on a different shape. He seemed to be part of everything. Part of the trees and the green grass. Part of the frolicking children. He belonged there. He suddenly felt drowsy and his eyes became heavier so he shut them.

He walked briskly through the park. His face appeared composed yet it looked like he was worried about something. He was dressed expensively in finely tailored clothes. He put his hand on his chest as if it would stop a pain. He realized he should stop for a moment and breathe deeply as the doctor had told him. Relax. I have to relax.

He saw a bench and thought it would be healthy if he just sat and calmed down. But he found he could not. Nervously he began to whistle.

"Hey, the Forest Hills High School pep song! Did you go there? It took me a while to place it, but how could I ever forget it!"

He looked over to see a haggardly old man staring excitedly at him.

"Why yes," he replied, a bit startled. "I didn't even know why I was humming it. As a matter of fact I didn't even know what I was...say...you look fam — It's coming to me....Buck. BUCK GIBBONS!! Buck, my boy, how ya doin?"

"Chip Goldwater! My, it's been a long time. I'm fine. How are you?" He chuckled in amazement of the time that had passed by so quickly.

The ragged man looked his old friend over, noticing how expensively dressed he was.

"Hey, you like the threads. This is nothing. Listen, I have a business meeting in an hour so we have some time to shoot the breeze!"

"So you got into business, did you. I thought you'd become a furniture-maker. You had the talent for that and you enjoyed it."

The man looked down to hide his eyes and shrugged off what the other had said.

"More money in business. What do you do?"

"Oh, I get jobs here and there. I have a big family to support and —"

"A family? I tried that about ten years ago. It tied me down. Couldn't do any traveling. So I got a divorce and went straight to Europe. Did I live!" He felt above his small friend who probably knew nothing of the world.

There was nothing more to say and an uncomfortable silence filled the air. The man in the tailored suit began to get nervous and tapped his foot. It was too quiet.

The other tilted his head towards the sun so that its golden light covered his entire face. Its warmth filled his body and for a moment he forgot the other man was there.

Laughing nervously, Chip said, "Remember in high school you were voted 'most likely to succeed'? If they could have voted me anything it would have been 'most likely not to succeed.'"

He realized after that what he had said was very insulting. Again he laughed nervously.

He was relieved when he looked over to see his friend with his eyes closed looking at the sun.

He probably did not hear, he thought to himself.

He looked at his watch and saw he had only thirty minutes until his meeting. He began to grow nervous again.

Quickly he shook hands with the other and scuttled off in a hurry. The grungy man watched him scurry and he had to laugh because it reminded him of the beetle that had crossed his path earlier. He watched his friend until he could be seen no more.

He looked up at the clear blue sky and said out loud to the heavens, "Ah, I have succeeded."

These Halls

why does it seem —
i have walked down
these halls before
and felt the same
painful shiver
seize my
steps and
mind — this
emptiness professing
to be mere
solitude, a
pretended comfort — but
i find my
steps falter yet and
the brick sinks in
around me yet and
the adamant line
of wall upon
wall twists yet and
turns yet and i am once
more entrapped, ensnared
in these
halls,
these halls.....

Johanna Li

Winner of the dismal part of the **Cinnabar** *Dismal-Humorous contest.*

Winter's Beach

I.

thud, with a thud it falls to the ground
silently swallowing my last hope and precious breath

II.

until such day as we see fit

III.

tearing shrieking clawing at the thin cold
veil covering
my own face I scream
and pause for
a moment. break through the water gracefully

IV.

and I have woken at dawn
to watch the sunlit shadows
playfully echo my dim past

and I have suffered

V.

It is cold here on this winter's beach
Whose parking lot has but two cars —
The fisherman's and mine.

I inhale deeply, falsely treasuring the moment of
pretense
I thrust my gloved hands in the pockets of my down
jacket
And watch the fisherman cast for something tangible.

VI.

as we have dreaded this path before a
night of ancients gone between hear the
eternal cry of a seagull seagull

The Optimist

John Kormendi

His ribs stuck out from his flesh in such a grotesque fashion that it would've unleashed an unbearable surge of revulsion in even the most sadistic of men. There were unsteady streams of blood slowly rolling over his beaten face, making their way through the swollen patches of flesh that held together his broken bones. Half his hair was gone, and the few strands that were left took on a stark white shade. His teeth were rotting and yellowed and his breath carried a powerful stench of the smoke-filled air. He did not resemble anything human.

He cast a blank stare through the barbed wire barrier, his bony fingers hanging onto the fence for support, so his fragile legs would not collapse. His forehead and chest leaned against the wire, oblivious to the pain. His body had been subjected to so many perverse methods of torture that it was now immune to it.

Soon he would be dead and unceremoniously dumped into a cold pit with a number of other corpses. Accused of murdering a man whom he never met, who lived two thousand years ago and was more distant from his future followers than he was from his contemporary adversaries, he would soon meet him and ask him what went wrong. Soon he would die, and if there was a God, he would muster up enough energy to thank Him for this last act of "mercy."

He did all he could to stay alive. He withstood the indescribable dreams he heard at night and endured the pungent stench of human flesh which assaulted his nostrils at dawn. He was able to bear the taunts directed against him and his kind, and tolerate the degrading chores he was forced to perform. But not anymore. Hope had forsaken him altogether. There was no one to listen to, no one who cared. His world was a cruel one, where "people revelled in the sadistic torture and rape of honor they inflicted on others." "Where is your God now?" they taunted, a bloodthirsty look in their eyes. Good question.

In spite of all this, in spite of this hellish environment he was forced to become a part of, there was something to admire about this being who had once been a real person. With the chronic threat of death hanging over his head for who knows how long, he did not give in. For years, to him millenia, he had survived. It was not much of a life, and it seemed hard to find any admirable qualities for someone in his predicament. Why would he want to live? Is he such a glutton for punishment that he'd be willing to take more of this torture? No. This man had a desire to live, which provided the source from which he drew his patience and endurance. This is perhaps the strongest human attribute. This pitiful optimist proved to be a praiseworthy champion in a world where death was the only reward.

He was still staring out of the barbed wire fence, but his legs were giving way, pulling the rest of his frail body down to the blood-soaked ground. His hands, arms and forehead scraped against the rusted metal, opening his newly healed flesh as small rivulets of scarlet spewed forth. The intervals between his exhausted heartbeat grew longer and his head grew heavier, his chest heaving up an down with each final breath. His glazed eyes stared ahead, his cracked, chapped lips formed a weak imitation of a smile, knowing that the inevitable would bring relief for his beleaguered soul.

This broken man's heartbeats grew further apart, but a rush of optimism once again swelled within his breast. Maybe the next world would be different.

"Lonely Fruit"

I Am a Ball

I AM
A Ball.
A Soccer Ball,
A Basketball,
A Baseball.
It's thrown. It floats through the air.
You see it — You chase it — You catch it.
Don't drop it!
You fondle it carefully at first, then you toss it up
and down a few times as a tester. It's safe.
It's comfortable. So comfortable.
So you throw it, and smack it.
You kick it. You hit it. It's fun!
Oh what a marvelous toy!
I AM.
But you don't want to lose it.
Don't let it get too far away.
You play with it.
You get bored. You're tired. It's not new anymore.
You drop it!
It rolls away.
And rolls away.
And Rolls away.
Far Away.
I AM
A Ball.

Maria O'dea

life is a peach, and the
pit ain't so bad
'cause you can
make a ring out of it.

Lisa Hayle

feeltaste...

feeltaste
smellsightsound

lost

in the dimension of
free space

no
where
to go
for help
'cause
i
'm
a
l
one

Mukta Srivastav

Pit Stop

"no crackers,"
the cashier informs me,
her black-bangled
head tilted back,
haughty and affected —
(what power she holds
over me, I
think, as I
watch her ladle a
viscous soup into
a cheap china
"bowl")
now sitting down
at the falsely,
offensively cheerful
green table, I
regret ever having
let a good eighty-
five cents leave my
pockets for
this —
(the rice like
angry worms squirm
against my teeth, and
I crush them to a
mealy congealedness
in the sweet blood
acidity of chilly
tomato soup)

Johanna Li

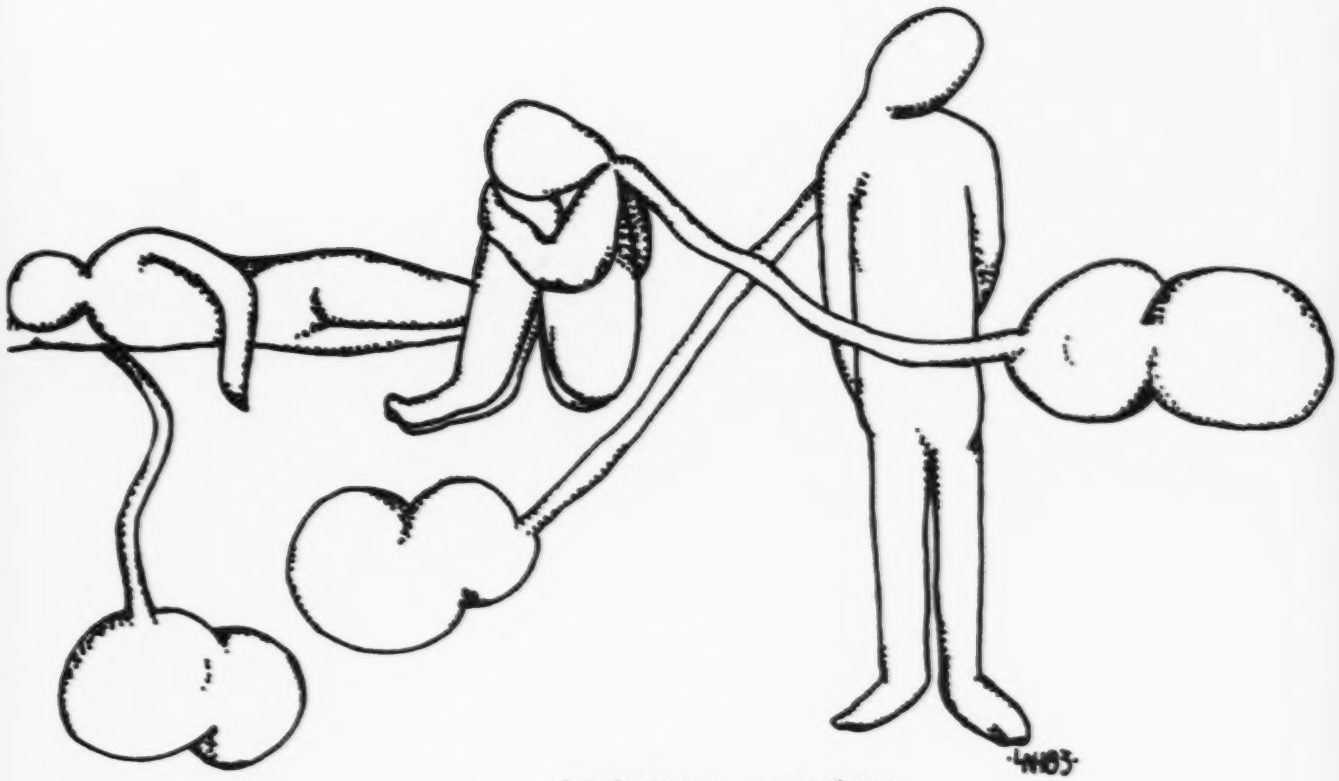
Exit Winter

The cold breath
sighs its last
as we sit here — the night air crackly cold
surrounds us
will not allow us to forget
that winter has passed

I can still hear the echoes,
voices of youth enraptured with
newfallen snow
winter's history
reflected in a thousand glistening streamlets
of thawed icicles

The grey mornings
shall turn to pastel blue
and frozen earth shall gradually lose its numbness
as the affectionate feet of children
dig into it in aggressive massage

Joanna Miller



"THE HUMAN CONSCIENCE"

My Id Told My Ego

My id told my ego
that I wanted a drink,
  So I reached for the Ammonia
  sitting next to the sink.

No—not that!, did my ego reply,
if you swallow that why surely you'll die!
  But the id kept insisting
  on quenching its thirst,
And the ego kept checking for safety first.

I finally got hold of some
water you see
  And the conflict was resolved inside of me.

Maria O'dea

Life vs. Death

Slowly the mushroom cloud rose above the fiery skies
Leaving behind it death, desolation, and destruction.
Rising ever higher, it billowed and bloomed,
beautiful against the setting sun.
Thinning out amidst the heavens,
It has destroyed the war-torn city, leaving it in peace.
Quietly the dust settles on the crushed buildings
Empty shells of glorified giants, now gone.
It annihilated in seconds what took years to achieve.
But from beneath the rubble, life begins to reappear.
Up from the grey ashes of death,
The green leaves sprout and grow,
Beginning life's cycle again.
Nature shall find a way to overcome
What Man has brought upon himself.

Anonymous

Man of the Family

Anita Eisenhart

A slow-burning cigarette sat quietly in the ash tray under a dimly lit antique lamp. The furniture was at least as old as the lamp (except for the rocking chair that Emma had reupholstered last spring). The dusty, moth-eaten drapes did their share in keeping the room from feeling the bright winter's sun. The only source of heat was the fireplace — and even the fire's eerie glow started to diminish, and yet there was enough to illuminate the old family photographs on the mantle.

"Emma...Emma, you in here?" Maggie-Sue, a fellow member of the local church's ladies' auxiliary, took it upon herself to walk in.

"Wh...Who's there?"

When Maggie-Sue heard the fright in her voice she quickly responded, "It's me, Maggie-Sue."

Without waiting for a response Maggie walked into the living room. There she saw Emma sitting by herself on the old love seat that sagged in the middle.

"Girl, you look worse 'n a cow after a storm!" Maggie paused, then continued, "Where've ya been? I haven't seen you on nigh to TWO MONTHS! You're usually in church ev'ry Sunday blabberin' 'bout one thin' 'r 'nother 'n now you ain't even said hello."

When Maggie got no response she started to wonder. "Emma, why'r ya starin' at them pichures over th' fireplace?"

"I ain't starin' at the pichures," she snapped.

She knew that Emma really was staring at the pictures, but didn't know why. Having no other ideas, she decided to try and make small talk to see what was bothering her.

"Oh, I 'member when this here pichure was taken o' your husband....He was a good man....Actually, I thought he was kinda crazy myself. Nevertheless, he never did nothin' t' harm no one (except when he was fightin' in that war)."

Emma just sat there, motionless and expressionless. It was as if she hadn't heard a word Maggie-Sue said.

"Who's this?" Maggie asked. "Emma, EMMA...!"

"Wha...what...did ya say somethin', Mag?"

"Yea, who's this a pichure of?"

"That's Daddy. He got killed 'n that big storm your folks is always talkin' 'bout. He was out tendin' t' th' animals 'n was so worried 'bout their safety he plum fergot 'bout his own."

"Oh yeah, I sorta 'member you tellin' me that. It's a darn shame."

There was silence while Maggie-Sue was trying to figure out what to say next. She decided to continue questioning Emma.

"Who's this good-lookin' guy next t' your daddy?"

"That's Uncle Bob. Boy, that man was stronger 'n an ox."

"Where is he? What happened t' him?"

"He's at some sorta permanent hospital...."

"Why? What hap..."

"I was jest gettin' t' that....Ya see, one day he was helpin' one o' his neighbors build a new supply shed when all of th' sudden a big two-by-four come crashin' down on his head. The doctors say he got 'brain damage' and cain't function like no normal human bein'."

Realizing that this conversation was only making matters worse, Maggie-Sue asked about someone she thought would definitely cheer up Emma.

"Oh and here's Jimmy." Maggie got a proud honored-to-

Yul Was Happy

Yul was happy. Later, after his bird had died, he robbed a store. Yul went to the counter and asked for a tuxedo. While the salesman was trying to find one, he broke open the cash register. So did Yul. Both were delighted to find money inside. Yul went next door to buy some ice cream but found only a desolate wasteland. Such disappointment is rare.

Now it was time to go home. Opening his car door, Yul was surprised to see an albino silently preparing an elaborate French meal. A strange sense of deja vu crawled adroitly down his spine. My Lord, he thought.

our good truckin buddy Stu

know-him look on her face. "How's that boy o' yours doin' in that big school 'n th' city?"

Suddenly, any sign of emotion that might have been on Emma's face disappeared.

"Emma...Emma? You look like ya jest seen a ghost 'r somethin'. Emma...? Emma, what's 'a matter?...Emma...?"

Emma slowly pulled out a wrinkled letter from the pocket of her housecoat.

"Here...read this, Mag," she mumbled as she handed her the letter.

"What's this?"

"It's from Luke, Jimmy's best friend at school. Read it 'a loud."

Maggie-Sue reluctantly took the letter and started reading.

"Dear Mrs. Jones, I don't want to beat around the bush too much, so I'll get right to the point. When Jimmy came back from Thanksgiving vacation he told me he *had* to get an "A" on his term-paper. He would say things like, "I have to do well for Mama's sake," or, "My mama said that I'm the only man in the family and that I should be rich and successful and make *Jones* a proud name." Anyway, when he found out that he only got a "B+" he got a little drunk. The next night he got drunk again. This continued for a while. He started going to late night parties and would come back so drunk that he would fall asleep on the floor and miss his morning classes. I tried talking to him — he wouldn't listen. This wasn't the Jimmy I knew...."

Maggie-Sue stopped for a moment, trying to predict where this letter was leading.

"Keep on goin', Mag. Keep on readin'."

Maggie looked up at Emma as she said this and saw her eyes filling with angry tears. She continued.

"Anyway, last night he went to one of those parties and got drunk (as usual). The only difference this time was that he and a few other guys went on the roof with their bottles and dared each other to jump. Well, Jimmy, being the proud man that he was, jumped. He's...He's...oh m' God, Emma, I cain't read this!"

"It's all m' fault, Maggie! It's all my fault."

Emma burst into tears.

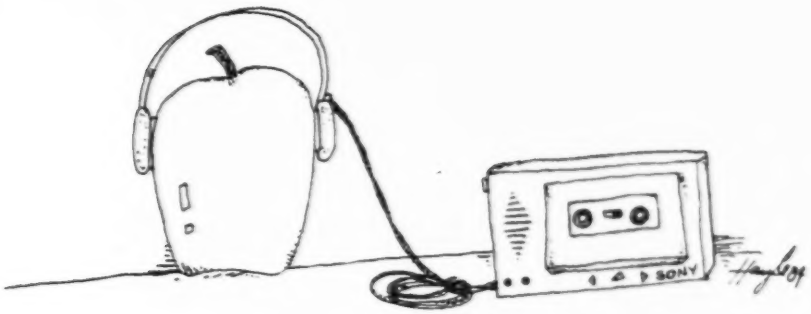
"It's like I climbed right up there on that roof and pushed him off myself. It's all m..."

"STOP IT! You cain't blame yourself for mistakes Jimmy made."

"How could ya say it's not my fault? Didn't ya hear what he said 'n that letter? I pressured him into gettin' them grades and he wanted to jest to please me, his 'mama.' I dunit...I dunit, alright. It's all my fault."

Just then, like a bolt of lightning, Emma pushed Maggie-Sue out of the way and ran out of the house. The squeaky, wooden screen door slammed, Maggie-Sue was left standing there, alone, in the dark room with the moth-eaten drapes and the smouldering fire. Under the antique lamp she saw Emma's cigarette slowly disintegrate to ashes.

47



a modern apple

Fast Food

Barbara Boroson

"Ah...pardon me...PARDON ME! How can you have the nerve to call this a 'fast food' restaurant? I'm certain your nail polish color is of utmost importance, but if you could manage to find a spare second, I'd very much like to place my order."

"WelcometoQuickie'sMayItakeyourorderplease?"

"I'll have a Quickie Burger: hold the Quickie Sauce, the lettuce, the tomato, and the onion."

"Sir, if you got a regular burger, it wouldn't have any of that on it, and it's only $1.07."

"Yes, but does that include pickles?"

"Um...Lori! Does a regular have pickles?"

"Um...no."

"No sir, it doesn't."

"Well, I always eat my hamburgers with pickles."

"Okay then, the Quickie Burger will be $2.61."

"You can't mean that! $2.61? Even without Quickie Sauce, lettuce, tomato, and onion?"

"Yes, unless you want a regular."

"Can I get a regular with pickles?"

"Um...Lori! Will Bob put pickles on a regular?"

"Um...Bob! Will you stick pickles on a regular?"

"No way."

"No way."

"No way. I mean, sorry sir, we can't."

"Well, in that case, I'll have a Quickie Burger: hold the Quickie Sauce, the lettuce, the tomato, and the onion; a large order of french fries, and a medium coke."

"Okay. That comes to...$4.03."

"Certainly. Oh, one moment please. Am I mistaken or do you take competitors' coupons?"

"Yes, we do...I think. Um...Lori! Do we take, um...other places' coupons?"

"Um, yeah, we do."

"Yeah, we...I mean, yes sir, we do."

"Wonderful. I have one here."

"Um...sir? This is for a Whapper *with cheese*. You can't use it for a plain Quickie Burger. You can only use it for a Quickie Burger with cheese."

"Oh, dear. In that case, I suppose I'll change my order. Make it a medium coke, a large order of french fries, and a Quickie Burger *with cheese:* hold the Quickie Sauce, the lettuce, the tomato, the onion, and the cheese."

"Hang out. I don't think you can do that. Lori! Can he do that?"

"Do what?"

"Order a Quickie with cheese without cheese."

"Why would he wanna do that?"

"Because...oh, forget it. Mister, do whatever the h--whatever you want. Is *that* what you want?"

"No. Actually, I believe what I really want is a regular burger with pickles..."

A Poem in Cut Time

later when the sweat dries on your
flesh and you've stopped running running
you can sit in the darkness and
think think about why you have been
running and stopping and thinking
and asking asking yourself why

Lisa Hayle

Bottom of the Jar, Top of the Sky

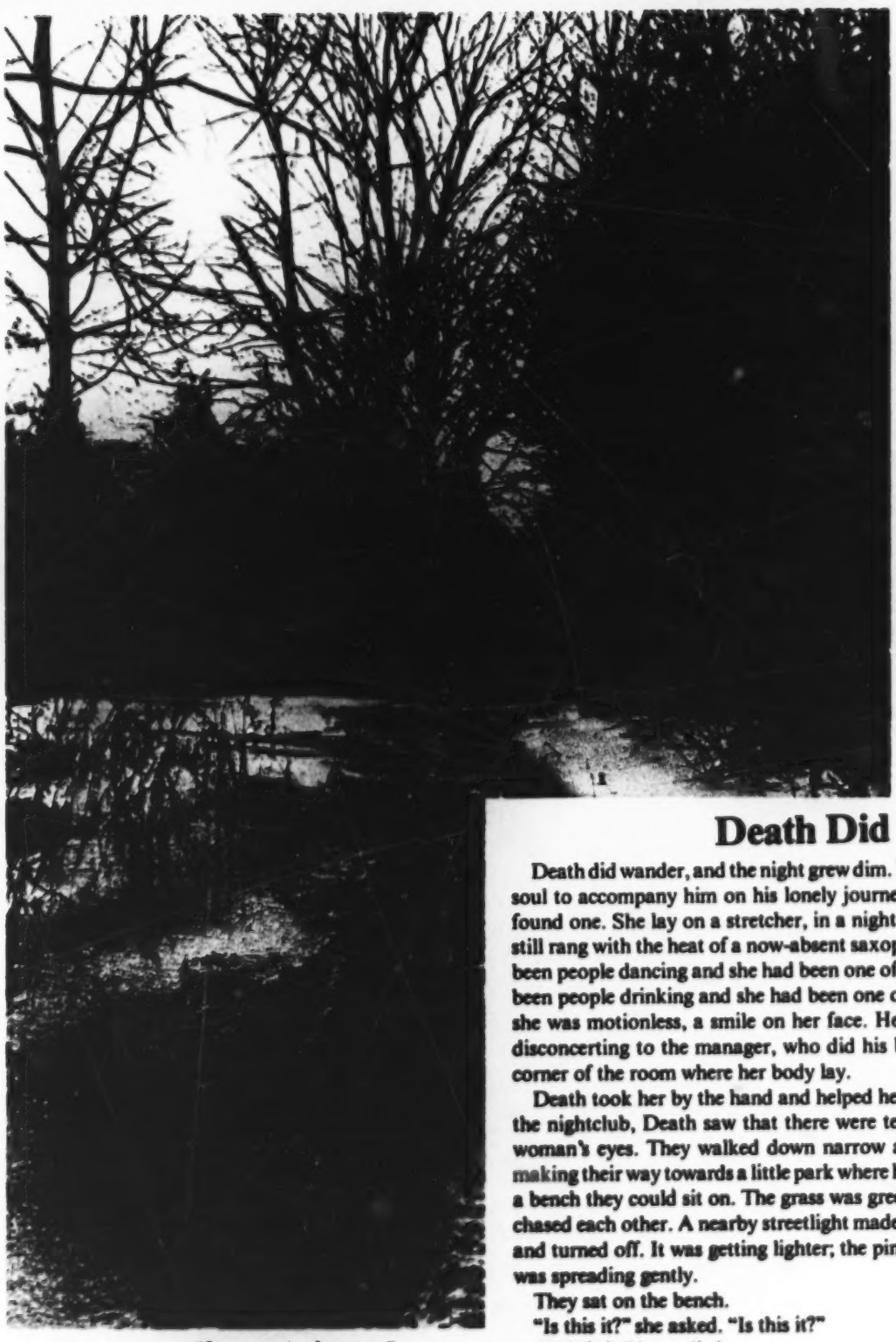
Lost: Glasses, Slipper, and Little Child

David Lazer

A person puts his glasses down on the table and steps out of the room temporarily. A little elf tiptoes out of the closet, flashing an evil grin. He carefully picks up the glasses and places them on the chair. Upon hearing footsteps, he hastily returns to the closet. The person re-enters the room, humming a cheery tune. He reaches for his glasses on the desk and finds them missing. He squints a little, scanning the table. He opens all the drawers and flings apart his bed in his frantic search. Finally, in exasperation, he throws himself onto his chair. He utters a small scream and quickly jumps up, picking up the scarcely recognizable mangled remains of what were his glasses. He heaves a deep sigh and tosses them onto the heap of bent and broken glass frames and cracked and shattered lenses in the corner of the room. A little chuckle emanates from the closet.

This is a True Story. How many times have you "misplaced" your glasses? Or, if you can see perfectly, how many times have you "lost" important papers, books, pens, watches or little children? Has your alarm ever not gone off in the morning, perhaps implying that you had "forgotten" to set it in the evening? Or, if your alarm does go off, it's on the weekend. You might conclude that you had set it out of "force of habit." If you have gone through these or similar traumatic experiences, you have been duped by your local "elf." These are not elves in the J.R.R. Tolkien sense. No, no, these are vicious, low creatures whose sole purpose in life is to confuse and befuddle otherwise organized and coherent people. The consequences can be terrifying. A war once resulted when the leaders of the respective countries could not find a pen with which to sign a peace treaty. Divorces have been caused by frustration over a lost slipper. Jobs have been lost, brilliant ideas forgotten, papers not written, and sleep lost because of these vile little creatures.

Clearly, something should be done. Contact lenses might be a stopgap measure for those with glasses, but stronger action must be taken. One proposal is for everyone to move out of his house for a year, in the hope that the elves would die of boredom. It is likely, however, that the Prevention of Cruelty to Elves Society would protest this. Another idea is to round up all the elves and try to reform them. However, this has been roundly attacked, because, aside from the logistical problems of rounding them up, elves are wily creatures and would soon go back to their old ways. So, what should we do? I would suggest that we should set up a Commission to investigate the problem before we try to solve it. Meanwhile, we'll just have to live with our "human" fallibilities and make the best of it.



"footsteps in the snow"

Death Did Wander

Death did wander, and the night grew dim. He searched for a soul to accompany him on his lonely journey. At sunrise, he found one. She lay on a stretcher, in a nightclub whose walls still rang with the heat of a now-absent saxophone. There had been people dancing and she had been one of them. There had been people drinking and she had been one of them too. Now she was motionless, a smile on her face. Her smile was very disconcerting to the manager, who did his best to avoid the corner of the room where her body lay.

Death took her by the hand and helped her up. As they left the nightclub, Death saw that there were tears in the young woman's eyes. They walked down narrow alleyways, slowly making their way towards a little park where he knew there was a bench they could sit on. The grass was green. Two squirrels chased each other. A nearby streetlight made a buzzing sound and turned off. It was getting lighter; the pink on the horizon was spreading gently.

They sat on the bench.

"Is this it?" she asked. "Is this it?"

"This is it," he replied.

Stuart Semmel

Death, Death, Death

Oh Death!
Death, Death, Death, Death, Death!
Who are you?
What are you?
Why are you?

Oh NO! It's worse than I thought!
And I'm only 4 years old.

John Robillard

I Am So Bored

Indoors — waiting for the phone to ring — I try to

Amuse myself to pass the time
Minutes go slowly — hours feel like an eternity
  I hear the phone ring, but it's not for me
So I go back to my own world
On and on,
  I can't escape.

Bored and lonely, I gaze
Out into the darkness of the night — soon
Rings come to my ears — like a gift. I
Enter the other room to hear the
Doorbell. Someone to see ME.

Michael Taylor

Log Entry

In the year two thousand one
Inter war had just begun
The songs of hope never rung
Church bells glowed but seldom sung

And people cried,
While others died,
I sat in Loam
And wrote this poem.

John Martel

Answers to the Cryptographer's Corner:

a.) Every time a child says, "I don't believe in fairies," there is a little fairy somewhere that falls down dead.

— Sir James Matthew Barrie

b.) I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood.

— Last statement
John Brown

c.) What's the use of worrying?
  It never was worth while,
So, pack up your troubles in your
  old kit-bag,
And smile, smile, smile.

— George Asaf

d.) Man is only a reed, the weakest thing
in nature; but he is a thinking reed.

— Blaise Pascal

The Dove

Alicia Kuzman

The wind had finally stopped blowing. The now peaceful street, littered with twigs and rain-soaked leaves, shone in the morning sun. It had rained for days. At first, it was a gentle shower, sprinkling the few trees that grew between the houses, feeding the scrawny window box flowers. It fell softly, without notice. But then it really began to rain. Harder and harder, without end. Torrents of rain pounded the earth, beat down on the frail branches, choked the fragile plants. Great gusts of wind blew, hassling the litter, scattering debris into every direction. It became a violent monster and raged out of control. Until this morning.

The sun rose quietly, finally showing its bright face, gently drying the sodden concrete. It coaxed the morning to resume the activities stopped by the storm. Watching from the window, the girl could see the great flashes of lightning and feel the whole building shake. With each thunderous clap she could hear her dog's fear-filled whimper from under the chair. Each day her gaze would remain steady, fixed on the outside. She had waited patiently for the rain to stop so that she could return to her playing.

"Sit up straight, Dee-Dee, and eat your breakfast. It's getting cold."

A voice snapped at her, jolting her back to the reality of the small kitchen. The sunlight flooded in through the smoky pane.

"All you do is stare out that damn window."

Her mother stood over her, dragging nervously on a cigarette. She blew the smoke out in sturdy rings. They drifted down in front of Dee-Dee, breaking apart in her small face, enveloping her in a cloud.

"Jesus," her mother continued coldly, "if there was something exciting out there, I could understand, but..."

Dee-Dee looked at the figure looming in front of her. She didn't say anything; she just stared.

"Well, eat your breakfast anyway," her mother said.

She was a gaunt woman of thirty-three, who reminded Dee-Dee of an alleycat she once saw. Her mother had thin, dirty blond hair, dry from over-dyeing and perming. It looked and felt like matted straw. She had bony hands and yellowing teeth. She walked as if it pained her whole body, wincing at every step.

Her nails were long and claw-like, polished with an obnoxious red lacquer. She drummed them impatiently on the checkered cloth that covered the pockmarked table. She rarely went out, maybe to buy dog food or some chicken. She was annoyed at the constant trouble her ten-year-old daughter caused her.

"I wanna go outside," Dee-Dee whined, breaking the awkward silence her mother had created. "I was waiting for the rain to stop."

"Well, if you eat your breakfast, you can go outside," her mother answered, mimicking her daughter's high-pitched voice. She turned back to the ironing board and reglued her eyes to the black and white television set in the corner.

"Fine, I'll do that," Dee-Dee said hotly, stooping over to feed the dog the remainder of her cold oatmeal. She slipped out of her chair, past her mother to look for her sneakers in the hall closet.

She grabbed her blue windbreaker from its wire hanger and returned to where her mother was engrossed in a television show. She noticed, too, that her mother was burning the shirt she was supposed to be ironing.

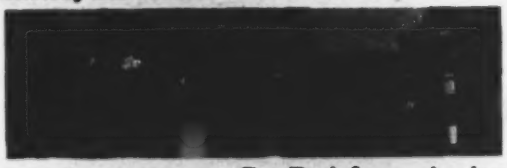
"I'm going outside," Dee-Dee announced, struggling with her Big Bird sneakers. She fumbled with the laces, tying knots and sloppy bows. "I don't know where I'm going, but I'm going and I..."

Her mother nodded her head, her eyes fixed on the set. Dee-Dee could have been telling her that the dog was throwing up. She really didn't care. She returned to life with the appearance of a commercial. She heard Dee-Dee's voice in the hall.

"...and I'll be back later." She heard the door slam and realized what had been said.

"Dee-Dee," she called to the empty hallway, "don't bring back any more junk!"

It was too late, Dee-Dee was already gone. She was already out the door, intent on finding some new thing to bring back with her and keep in her room. She needed something to relieve the monotony and boredom. She needed a toy.



The sun shone warm upon Dee-Dee's face as she closed the outside door. The dirty spring air caught her nostrils and stayed there. Dee-Dee disliked the smell; it smelled like the city. Although she didn't live in the city, she did live close enough to catch all the odors it threw into the air. Dee-Dee looked at the street and the new day ahead of her. The houses stood next to each other, all looking the same. They were dirty and shabby, with broken shingles and sagging shutters. The cars that drove by were noisy and rumbling. Their tailpipes added smoke and fumes to the air, making it fouler than it already was. The sidewalks were cracked, the streets were full of holes. The children would play everywhere and anywhere they could find some space.

Dee-Dee wanted to be left alone, to be out and free. Away from her mother and the cluttered apartment. She was excited about this new day. She was ready to explore and discover. She bounded down the steps and half skipping, half running, started down the street.

The rain water was almost gone. Puddles filled the gaping holes and cut into every crack and crevice that streaked the sidewalk. It left its mark on the dented garbage can lids. Dee-Dee splashed and jumped in every puddle. She loved to get dirty and play in the mud and water. It was so rebellious. She picked up broken sticks, kicked over dirty cans and boxes. She explored everything, from old magazines and soggy newspapers to discarded furniture and broken-down cars.

When she came to a cluster of garbage cans, she stopped. They were old and battered with flakes of rust collected around the bottom. They were overflowing with garbage and trash; some of it had even fallen into the street. The discarded things beckoned to Dee-Dee, inviting her to take a look. The discarded things beckoned to Dee-Dee, inviting her to take a look. She loved garbage cans; they stirred her curiosity and imagination. She loved to go through them, searching for knick-knacks and other little things. What other people would consider junk, Dee-Dee would consider priceless treasures, each one full of adventure, each one telling its own tale.

Her mother's nagging voice repeated over and over inside her head, "No more junk, no more junk."

"What could be junk?" Dee-Dee thought to herself, "An old hat that nobody wanted? A chipped ashtray or scratched record that wasn't good enough for whomever it was intended?" It was good enough for Dee-Dee; she didn't mind. A twinge of guilt did run through her as she peered into the darkness of the can. Maybe she shouldn't look, maybe her mother was right, it was junk. But she could hide whatever she found. Her mother would never find it, not right away, anyway. She glanced up, making sure that no one was watching her, no one could tell on her.

The street was quiet, the leaves rustled and stirred in the slight morning breeze. The sun, bright and blinding, reflected on the lid of the can. Dee-Dee hesitated. As she began to remove the lid for a final plunge, a flash of white caught her eye. She stopped. Quietly, she replaced the lid and moved closer. Something, something had moved in the gutter. She heard the leaves rustling and bent down to take a look.

It was nestled near a drain, wedged in between the broken twigs and soaked leaves. Its small black eyes blinked with every move of its tiny head. Dee-Dee was filled with awe and excitement, sympathy and curiosity. She had never seen anything like it before. It was a bird of some kind, a sleek creature with a body snowy white, wings covered in soft grey and a tail silver mixed with chestnut streaks.

She picked it up and held it tight and close in her hands. She gently stroked its feathery head and cradled its fragile body. She didn't know what kind of bird it was since she had never seen one up close before. It was white, that was obvious. The only white bird she had ever seen was a dove. It was her dove, she had found it and she was going to keep it and take care of it. No one was going to take it away, especially her mother.

Dee-Dee placed the bird gently back onto the ground. She wriggled out of her windbreaker and proceeded to wrap it securely around the bird. She guessed its wing was broken, for it wouldn't move at all. It sat calmly as she wrapped it up, its black eyes flashing with bewilderment and fear. Dee-Dee picked up her precious cargo and began back up the street, towards the apartment. This was better than some broken piece of costume jewelry any day, she thought to herself. The only hard part would be keeping it away from her mother.

The steps of the small apartment building towered in front of her. The door stood mocking her, defying her to pass. She suddenly realized how difficult it was going to be. Thoughts of her mother filled her with anxiety and fear. How could she do it? How could she even get it inside without her mother pouncing on her, making her give it up, like a vicious cat, toying with a mouse. She knew her mother would throw the bird outside if she got her hands on it, saying it was diseased or

something. She just didn't want Dee-Dee to have any fun.

Dee-Dee looked around wildly for something to hide it in. Just thinking of her mother's wrath made her nervous. Anything, anything would do. She spied an empty shoebox in the corner of the stairwell. It contained the moldy remains of a chicken sandwich and a dirty, ragged handkerchief. They were damp from the rain but still intact. Dee-Dee snatched it up, spilling out the rancid water, tossing the sandwich to the ground. She unwrapped the bird and carefully placed it inside the box, covering it with the handkerchief. She secured the lid, and with one final glance around she slowly turned the knob to the outside door, pushed past the inside door and stepped into the apartment.

The greasy smell of fried chicken greeted her as she shut the door behind her. She quietly replaced her windbreaker in the closet, being careful not to disturb the cloaks and raincoats. The fading sunlight still lit the dreary kitchen. Dee-Dee could see it filtering through the grease and cigarette smoke that clung to the air. She could faintly hear the jumbled conversations of her mother's soap opera. She wondered if her mother was watching it. Usually she could hear her mother talking to herself, commenting on the typical plots and one-dimensional characters, but she didn't hear anything now. It made her nervous not knowing where her mother was. Quietly Dee-Dee picked up the box and began to tip-toe towards her room.

"Where did you go, young lady?" Her mother stepped from the shadows. She blocked the hall entrance with her bony frame.

"I, I, I..." Dee-Dee was frozen. Her heart pounded wildly in her ears. Her mother had sprung out of nowhere, so unexpected it made Dee-Dee jump.

"What's in the box?" her mother continued, staring down at Dee-Dee with intensity and thoughts of cruelty. She thought it was rude the way her daughter had tried to sneak into the house. She wasn't going to let her get away with it unrebuked.

"I, I, I..." Dee-Dee stammered again. Think of something fast, she thought to herself. "I found a bird," she said finally, lifting the lid so her mother could see. "I don't know what's wrong with it. I think its wing is broken or something."

She looked nervously up at her mother, waiting for the reaction.

"A bird, eh? How sweet. Polly wants a cracker?" Her mother mocked affection. "It does look kinda sick. Probably got some disease or somethin.' "

She lit a cigarette with a cheap Bic lighter. The smoke came out in the usual thick rings. They drifted down to the box, making Dee-Dee cough.

"What are you going to do with it?" her mother continued, the cigarette still hanging from her thin lips. She poked at the bird, pushing aside the raggy handkerchief.

"I think it's dead," she speculated. "I think you should throw it away. I'll do it...." She placed her bony hand on the edge of the box.

"NO!" Dee-Dee pulled back in horror. "I'm going to keep it and I'll make it better!"

She snatched the box from her mother's grasp and, roughly pushing past her, ran into her room. She slammed the door quickly behind her. She grabbed an old chair from the corner of her tiny room and jammed it under the doorknob. It couldn't be opened from the hallway. It was shut tight. She leaned heavily against it, catching her breath and calming her panic. Her mother began pounding on the door. She beat with such an intensity that Dee-Dee thought it just might break down.

"Dee-Dee!" her mother screamed through the closed door, "open up this minute!"

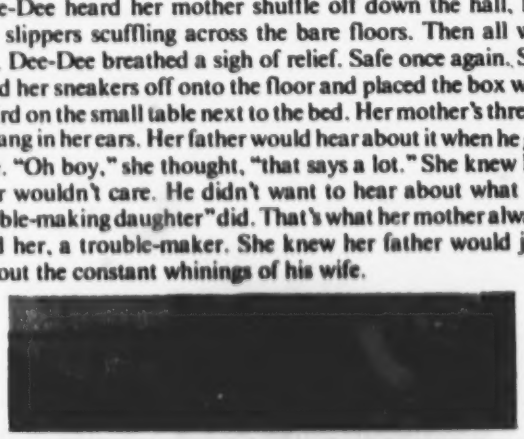
Dee-Dee stood silent on her side of the door waiting for her mother to finish. She smiled to herself as her mother went on and on. The door jam was an ingenious discovery Dee-Dee had made. She found that she was able to keep her mother out for hours. It was the only way she was able to escape her, except for the screams through the door.

"Damn it!" her mother continued, "if you don't open this door and get rid of that thing, you won't get any dinner. I mean it!"

The doorknob twisted furiously, wriggling back and forth. The pounding on the door made the paint flake off. It drifted to the floor slowly, like snowflakes. Suddenly it stopped. Everything was quiet. No pounding, no screaming, no nothing.

"All right, fine," the voice outside the door said calmly. "You can stay in there as long as you like. Don't expect any dinner, though. And DON'T think you're going to get off scot-free. Your father will hear about your little find. I will not tolerate that thing in my house. We'll see what *he* says."

Dee-Dee heard her mother shuffle off down the hall, her worn slippers scuffling across the bare floors. Then all was quiet. Dee-Dee breathed a sigh of relief. Safe once again. She kicked her sneakers off onto the floor and placed the box with the bird on the small table next to the bed. Her mother's threats still rang in her ears. Her father would hear about it when he got home. "Oh boy," she thought, "that says a lot." She knew her father wouldn't care. He didn't want to hear about what his "trouble-making daughter" did. That's what her mother always called her, a trouble-maker. She knew her father would just tune out the constant whinings of his wife.



It was getting dark. Dee-Dee turned on the light. The lamp cast a weak light on the closet-sized room. Dee-Dee fell back onto the bed and fixed her eyes on the jagged cracks that cut through the ceiling. The faded pink roses stood out against the crusty yellow wallpaper. The only decoration was a picture of a horse, thumbtacked to a cardboard frame. A worn green rug scantily covered the cold floor, the tattered fringe curling up like mini-garden snakes. The bed, covered with a gaudy aqua spread, stood crowded and low to the floor. Its pillow was thick, but its thin cover had ripped and the casing was pushing through.

But now she had something real, something alive. When she found her bird, she knew that this was what she had been waiting for. She never wanted to part from it. She turned onto her stomach to take a peek inside the box. She didn't want to disturb its rest.

The bird's eyes were dull and thick. It didn't move at all. It had fallen over on its side and hadn't tried to right itself.

Dee-Dee frowned. She knew her bird was sick. It could even die. She had to get some help for it, but where? Then she remembered a doctor's office right outside the city. Dr. Thayer, or something like that. She knew he was an animal doctor because they had taken their dog to him once. If she got an early start tomorrow, she could make it there and back in no time. It

wasn't too far. She could sneak out before her mother knew she was gone. That way she couldn't stop her.

Dee-Dee rejoiced at her sudden brainstorm. Her bird could get the medicine and proper care it needed so badly.

"Maybe he won't die," she thought. "Maybe he'll even fly again."

With that joyous thought, Dee-Dee covered the box and placed it back on the table. She pulled down the covers of her bed and climbed deep inside them, scrunching up to collect some warmth. She decided to sleep in her clothes; that way she could just get up and go in the morning. Before she turned out the light, she jumped out of bed and grabbed the chair out from under the doorknob. She returned it to its place in the corner.

As she got back in bed and settled down into the blankets, she heard the front door open. Her father was home. If she pretended to be asleep he wouldn't bother her. She heard, too, her mother's whining voice, rattling on and on about what had happened and what should be done. She turned off the light and snuggled into the pillow. Her eyes half-closed, she saw the door open and could feel the warmth from the kitchen. She feigned slumber, throwing in a snore or two for credibility. She saw the door closing and the hall light going off and she knew she could go to sleep for real.

The sky was grey when Dee-Dee awoke. She didn't know what time it was; she guessed it was pretty early. She twisted out of her warm blankets, fixing her jumbled hair and tousled clothes. Her first concern was the bird. Had it survived the night? Cautiously she lifted the lid, afraid to breathe and awaken the sleeping bird. It was still there and still alive, to her relief.

She covered the box and leaned towards the window. She pulled up the rattling shade and gazed through the dirty glass. Grey light covered the early sky. Weak morning sunlight passed through the moving clouds, adding a faintness to the coming day. Rain clouds threatened far off near the city. Dee-Dee frowned. She knew it wouldn't last; the rain would return.

She would have to hurry. She scrambled for her sneakers, throwing them hurriedly [illegible] feet, not bothering with the laces. She stood [illegible] if she had everything she would [illegible] turned the rusted handle and [illegible] down the hall, being careful not to make a sound and disturb the sleeping apartment.

Finally she reached the door. Her father's workboots stood next to a brown wooden chair, their laces hanging out like thin spaghetti, their tongues sticking straight up, razzberrying Dee-Dee and her "pet" sneaking out into the morning. Dee-Dee quietly tugged her raincoat from a peg on the wall. The rubber rustled noisily, cutting the silence of the room. She unbolted the door and, looking around one last time, pulled it open. She slipped through the doors into the early morning. She firmly but quietly closed the door behind her and began her journey to the doctor's office.

The air was cool and smelled like rain. Dee-Dee knew she would have to hurry if she wanted to beat it. She pulled the box closer to her body and picked up her pace. She hoped the long journey wouldn't be too rough on the bird. She continued down the street, past the colorless houses and brimming cans. She could hear the morning traffic, the wailing of taxi horns, the screeching brakes of steaming trucks. She would stop at the traffic lights, counting them as she went by, trying to remember the way. Farther and farther she went into the morning, past empty lots, full of garbage and broken bottles, past rowdy boys, playing street hockey before it got too busy. She cut through a path, past an abandoned factory, whose stacks once spewed grime and smoke into the air. Now they stood quiet, silhouetted against the grey sky.

Now she could see the city's buildings and felt a little more at ease. At least they were in sight and she knew she had come to the right place.

She spotted the doctor's office where she remembered it, right between a Crazy Eddie's and a Fayva Shoe store. It had two windows which you couldn't see through from the outside. There was a bold black and gold sign by the door that read Dr. M. THAYER, M.D., D.V.M. Meekly Dee-Dee grabbed the thick metal doorknob and pulled hard. With some difficulty, it opened and she hesitatingly ventured inside.

The office was pale and had a lingering smell of antiseptic. Stiff brass lamps stood on the dark mahogany tables. There was no rug, only decorative tiles designed to look like cut marble. They looked fake and added only a slight tackiness to the room. A hatrack stood empty in the corner, looking like a tree bared for winter. Hard wooden chairs covered with scrawny cushions surrounded an old oak table in the corner. Magazines littered the top, their edges torn, their plastic coverings cracked and yellowed. Framed posters of Norman Rockwell's *Saturday Evening Post* covers hung on the wall. Their frames were thick with layers of untouched dust. From somewhere in the wall a musak version of "Hey Jude" was being piped in. There was one other door, leading to the inner office and examining rooms. It was the only new-looking thing in the place. It was shiny chestnut with a gold-handled knob. It stood out against the aged room. There was a nurse behind a clouded window in the wall. Dee-Dee could see her white uniform and hear her typewriter tapping. Clearing her throat, Dee-Dee walked up to the window and tapped lightly.

It opened.

"Yes, dear? What can I do for you?" The nurse's voice was sweet and quiet. Dee-Dee couldn't see too far into the window; she could only hear the voice.

"I, I have a sick bird," Dee-Dee said weakly. "I, I was wondering if the doctor could help it."

Dee-Dee's hands were shaking as she held up the box for the nurse to see. She prayed the doctor would take it.

"Well," the nurse said, rising from behind her desk, "I'll see. The doctor is a little busy now, but I'll ask him. Just take a seat and I'll be with you in a few minutes."

With that, the window shut, leaving Dee-Dee still straining to hold the box up high enough for the nurse to see.

"Thank you," Dee-Dee said quietly to the closed window.

She turned around and walked over to one of the chairs. She placed the box on the table and sat down. Her rubber raincoat rustled against the back of the hard chair. She sat for what seemed an eternity.

When the door finally opened, Dee-Dee was able to get a better look at the voice behind the glass. The nurse was chunky and looked old enough to be a grandmother. She wore flashy gold bracelets and a big pearl ring. Her legs were thick and her feet were swallowed up by the heavy orthopedic "nurse's" shoes she wore. Her face was round and friendly, covered with pink rouge and pancake powder. The red lipstick she wore made the lines around her mouth stick out. Her hair was salt and pepper grey, wrapped tightly and neatly in a large bun behind her head. She looked kind of like a wedding cake, her nurse's cap topping it off.

"The doctor said he would see what he could do," she red. She hadn't really asked him yet. It was just that the little girl was so cute and she was really moved by her compassion.

"I'll take it back to him if you like," the nurse said gently, stretching out her wrinkled hand. She waited for the little girl's reply.

"Well, thank you," Dee-Dee said meekly. She didn't know whether to laugh or cry. She wanted to keep the bird so much but wanted it to get better even more.

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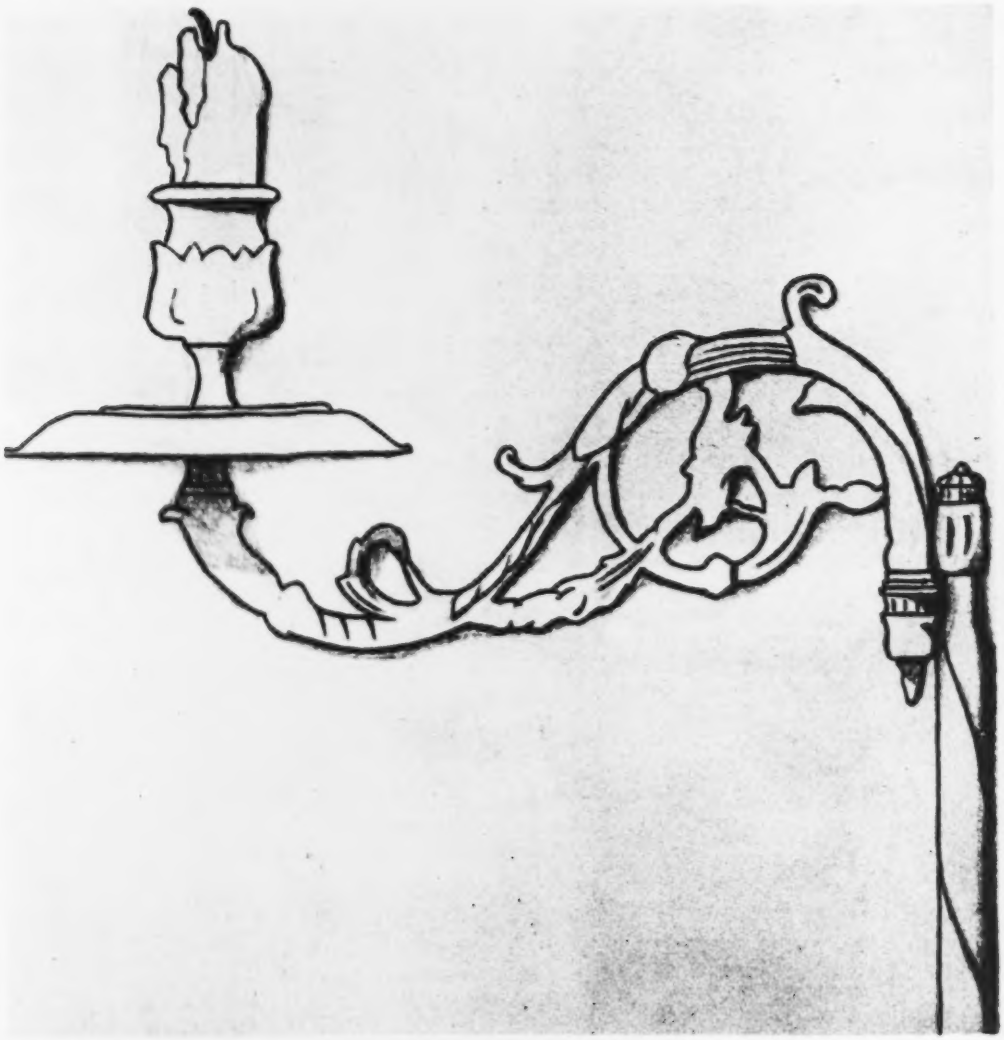


"I hope the doctor can cure him," she said, staring down at the floor. She could feel the tears rising in her throat and she fought to choke them back down.

"I'm sure he can," the nurse said kindly. "He's a good doctor."

Dee-Dee thrust the box into the nurse's hands and turned to go. She knew her bird would be all right, it was just that she had waited for so long for something like it to come along. Now that it had, she had to give it up. She walked to the door and turned around once more to the nurse and her precious find.

"Good-bye," she said sadly, slipping out into the darkening day. She drew a deep breath and managed a smile. She had done the right thing. It made her feel good that her bird was going to be all right. She glanced up at the sky. The rain clouds had moved in; she would have to hurry home if she didn't want to get wet.

* * * * *

The doctor had a headache. "Damn this weather," he thought to himself. Rain always made his sinuses flare up. He looked down at the old shoe box on his desk. The smell filled him with disgust. "Take care of this," the nurse had said, with something about a little girl. What had to be taken care of? Obviously it was a dead pigeon, probably caught in last week's storm. He shook his head. "Why do I always get these kinds of dumb things?" he thought. He pressed down firmly on the orange call button of his intercom.

"Nurse Bradley," he called irritably into the small box, "please come in here."

He sat down again, examining the ragged handkerchief.

"Why me?" he thought. "Why me?" The door opened softly and the nurse appeared.

"Yes, Doctor?" she said, also noticing the dead pigeon and the dirty cloth.

"Get rid of this thing," the doctor said abruptly, trying to control the anger and annoyance that were growing inside of him.

"Throw it in the garbage, flush it, do whatever you like, just get rid of it." He picked up the box and forced it back into the hands of the silent nurse. "Then get some spray or something. The smell is unbearable." He waited. "That's all. You can go," he said finally. He picked up the phone and began dialing a number.

"Yes, Doctor," the nurse said obediently. She just couldn't erase the memory of the little girl's trusting face from her mind. It was so sad. She turned and left the office, closing the door behind her.

Then it began to rain. It tapped at the office windows and filled the empty waiting room with its steady rhythm. It fell softly without notice....

"Tea at Alice's"

Upon Passing a Cemetery in Queens

Though long past
her hour,
the debutante
frets restlessly under
her sod and
wonders,
when will he *ever*
bring me
flowers?

Johanna Li

Invincibility Lost

Legs kick, legs kick! Gasp, gulp!
Swimming, sinking,
Gotta kick!
Burning eyes, feeding panic.
Gotta kick!
Down under, up again.
Cough, gulp.
Merciless Neptune, impervious to opposition,
Sucking down!
Wildly flailing, quickly sinking.
Up again.
Earth
At once so close, but
Too far.

Thwarted hopes
And ambitions, not
A short past, flash
Before my eyes.
A clash of fate and failure
In my struggles.

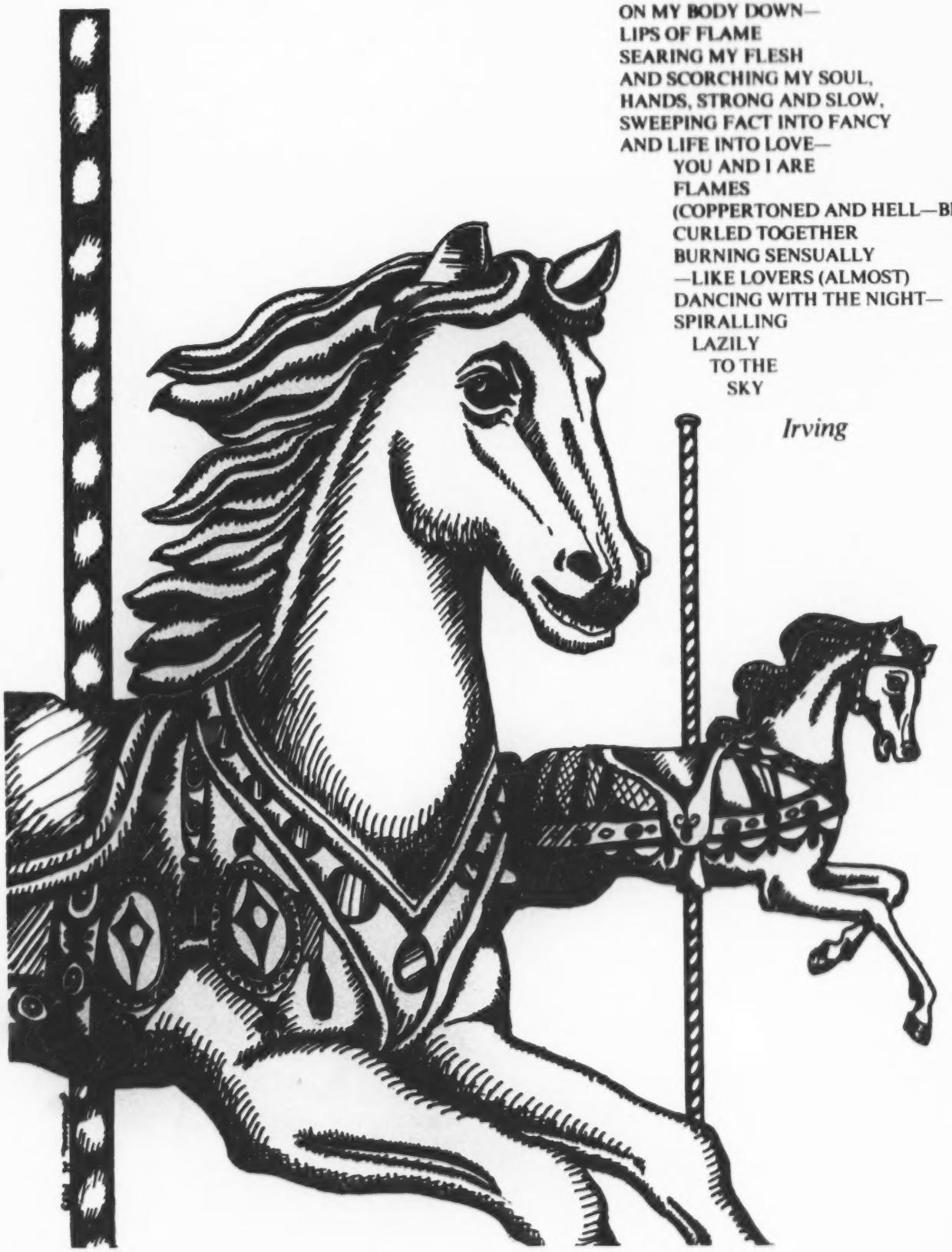
Up again!
There! Others! Scream! Help!
Sinking down, but
Suddenly
Arms lifting,
Firm grips, tugging,
Pulling
to safety.

Angry bloated blue, under a
Crisp white sheet,
Resting.
The bitter ocean of tears,
Cheerfully licking, whispering, tempting,
Nearby.

Sampson Nought

HIS CARESS IS FIERY
ON MY BODY DOWN—
LIPS OF FLAME
SEARING MY FLESH
AND SCORCHING MY SOUL,
HANDS, STRONG AND SLOW,
SWEEPING FACT INTO FANCY
AND LIFE INTO LOVE—
YOU AND I ARE
FLAMES
(COPPERTONED AND HELL—BRED)
CURLED TOGETHER
BURNING SENSUALLY
—LIKE LOVERS (ALMOST)
DANCING WITH THE NIGHT—
SPIRALLING
LAZILY
TO THE
SKY

Irving



Monday Morning in the Suburbs

In the morning when it's wet and dark
because the clocks are still on summer time,
dogs run in groups and tear at plastic garbage bags
spilling out scraps of the weekend.

Headlights make them pause
and look up with flashing eyes.
But they return to chicken bones and soggy boxes
as dawn struggles through the late October drizzle.

Brian McAuliffe

Front Page

I hear them falling
to the street,
from the ledges
made of stone.
Gargoyles leer at them,
hear them thump.
They hit the pavement
flesh meets stone.
They left no note.
Genocide,
why it happened
no one knows

B.L.C. Belluardo

Together

We'll all go down together
even though
together
we may go down
a little
faster

B.L.C. Belluardo

Heart Stealer

little bandit,
sly, cunning thief —
my estate quit —
left no relief.
My most precious cache, stolen away —
Unlike jewels, a higher price to pay —
But 'tis sooth to say that you bring me no trouble,
For what you have taken has returned in double.

Johanna Li

love's name

Love's name spoken conjures fanciful thought;
roses, or poppies yet, aflame, blaze light
ere passion's head nods to soft, perfumed night,
and rising is halo'd golden, sun-wrought.
Rosy notions, but a gamble half-bought
for ardor chills and scarlet mocks one's sight,
and vows half-true mend not the fear, the plight;
that love lost trails the promise of love sought.
True, love brews mead dangerously weighted;
it is only for one who dares, who sips
then awaits refusal or precious link
risks denial or all heaven sated
a secret kept 'til it moistens the lips —
Be brave, and of this heady liquor, drink.

Johanna Li

The Parting of a Soul

I looked at the rope so thick and long
It looked newly bought
It was able to weave through the thinnest doorways
with no trouble at all
It used to tightly bind a package
enduring the long trip ahead
That was only a month ago.

Now it looks ragged and effete
The ends are parted and vapid
The edges are chapped and dirty
It appears to be collapsing from weariness
It looks sick and diseased
It struggles at one last attempt to do a job well done
But nothing is well done anymore
How quickly it fades away

Now the rope has snapped
The last string tried to remain intact
But it could no longer tolerate the pain
I gaze at it now feeling the power of the morose air
It is morbid as it sits in its tomb
A tear falls as I reminisce about
How I loved that piece of rope
It had more strength than anything
I ever knew.

Lori Linger

sometimes...

sometimes —
only sometimes —
I cry:
when, wrapped in the darkness,
my mind dwells too harshly
on remembered pains and fears;
on the friendships
and loves I could have had
if only...

loneliness calls my name
echoing into the night
and then,
alone,
in the quiet of my room
I cry.

Irving

Springtime Thoughts in the Winter Breeze

A paper flies
flies away
in the breeze of a waning sun.
Man's thoughts
soar, soar to heights —
over the tallest mountains,
climbing to the pristine heavens above.
But only on
a paper....

David Lazer

Windows

autumn's frosted windows
dim my reflection
as I stare in
looking for
the real
me.
I
can not
see past the
twisted curves and
defined planes shown in
autumn's frosted windows.

Mukta Srivastav